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O. V. Hofacker

The Influence of Ibsen on  
Henry Arthur Jones



THE INFLUENCE OF IBSEN

ON

HENRY ARTHUR JONES

BY

OLGA VERA HOFACKER

B. A. University of Illinois, 1911

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THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Degree of

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IN ENGLISH

IN

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

1920





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H67

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

August 10, 191<sup>20</sup>

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY  
SUPERVISION BY Olga Vera Hofacker

ENTITLED THE INFLUENCE OF IBSEN ON HENRY ARTHUR JONES

BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
THE DEGREE OF Master of Arts in English

Wm. Kilham Dodge

In Charge of Thesis

Stuart P. Sherman

Head of Department

Recommendation concurred in\*

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Committee

on

Final Examination\*

\*Required for doctor's degree but not for master's

453938

March 25, 1880

My dear Mr. [illegible]

[The body of the letter is extremely faint and illegible. It appears to consist of several paragraphs of text.]



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## CHAPTER I

## THE INTRODUCTION OF IBSEN INTO ENGLAND.

On April 22, 1872 appeared in The Spectator the first essay on Ibsen in England. The honor of introducing the greatest and most imposing figure in modern dramatic literature to the English reading public belongs to Edmund Gosse. In 1879, the same author published a book, Studies in the Literature of Northern Europe, which contains a rather lengthy treatise on the Norwegian seer. A few years later Gosse translated Hedda Gabler, and in collaboration with William Archer, The Master Builder, (1893).

Although Edmund Gosse was the first to introduce Ibsen into England, nevertheless it is William Archer who was chiefly instrumental in making Ibsen more widely known to the English public. In 1880 he translated The Pillars of Society, which, owing to his efforts was performed in England in the same year. In 1890-91 appeared the first edition of his five volumes of Ibsen's Prose Dramas, and in 1892 he attempted, with the help of his brother<sup>1</sup> Charles, an English translation in verse of Peer Gynt. In recent years (1913) he has given to the world a translation of Ibsen's<sup>2</sup> complete works in eleven volumes.

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1. K. G. H. Teichmann, Henry Arthur Jones' Dramen, p. 28, note 1. See also Edmund Gosse, Studies in the Literature of Northern Europe, p. 77.
  2. William Archer, The Collected Works of Henrik Ibsen, (1913)





However, the introduction of a peculiar genius like Ibsen into England was not without difficulty. As on the Continent, he was misunderstood, denounced, and reviled. One should naturally think that a Homer, a Dante, or a Shakespeare had but to appear on the horizon of literature to be hailed immediately by his devotees as their Messiah. But not so with Ibsen. When A Doll's House, the play which broke down the barriers that shut in the "Wizard of the North" in the narrow bounds of Scandinavia, appeared in 1879 its importance as an epoch-making play was hardly suspected by the outside world. It was not until ten years later that this drama was presented with great credit at the Novelty Theatre, London.<sup>1</sup> Although vehement discussions followed this performance it was not until the appearance of Ghosts at the Independent Theatre, London,<sup>2</sup> on March 13, 1891, that the storm broke loose. Critics, who were still blinded with false standards of morality, and narrow visions of life, hurled abuses at the well-meaning author, and denounced him as "an enemy of the people". As a result, the play-going public was divided into two hostile camps, the one proclaiming him the greatest living dramatist and moral teacher, the other reviling him as a modern cyclops, scattering broadcast liquid corruption over innocent, decent humanity, thereby endangering the morals and the purity of our clean and noble race. Mr. Clement Scott, dramatic critic of the Daily Telegraph, was particularly bitter in his attack upon the Norwegian playwright.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, we find among the foremost champions of Ibsen in England at this time George Bernard Shaw.<sup>4</sup> In his book, The Quintessence of Ibsenism,

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1. The Collected Works of Henrik Ibsen, Introduction, p. X.
  2. The Collected Works of Henrik Ibsen, Introduction, p. XXIII.
  3. G. B. Shaw, The Quintessence of Ibsenism, p. 3.
  4. G. B. Shaw, The Quintessence of Ibsenism.





Shaw not only defends Ibsen's position in literature as a world dramatist and an uncompromising apostle of the truth, but also brings the poet nearer to the English public by his clear exposition of twelve of his plays. This Shaw did, we must remember, at a time when Ibsen was so generally and so persistently misjudged. His defense of Ghosts is especially strong. He calls our attention to the high and noble sentiment which prompted Ibsen to give to the world this masterpiece of modern tragedy. He says that the onward march of progress of humanity necessitates innovations and the rejection of the old to make place for the new. Ibsen fearlessly broke away from the old and undauntedly espoused the new. Shaw says: "There is nothing new, then, in the defiance of duty by the reformer: every step of progress means a duty repudiated, and a scripture torn up. And every reformer is denounced accordingly, Luther as an apostate, Cromwell as a traitor, Mary Wollstonecraft as an unwomanly virago, Shelley as a libertine, and Ibsen as all the things enumerated in the Daily Telegraph." <sup>1</sup> According to Shaw, as man's spirit grows from century to century, "he dares more and more to love and trust <sup>2</sup> instead of to fear and fight". And he further says: ".....every mask requires a hero to tear it off." <sup>3</sup> But the most incredible <sup>that</sup> thing about the whole affair is, notwithstanding this brilliant defense of Shaw's, Ghosts remained for twenty years an exile from the English stage, while as early as May 1, 1882, a Danish company gave it in the Dano-Norwegian language in Chicago. In the same year it was performed by this company in Minneapolis and many other <sup>4</sup> western cities. In 1894 and earlier it was played without

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1. The Quintessence of Ibsenism, p. 8

2. Ibid. p. 20

3. Ibid.

4. Henrik Ibsen Samlede Vaerker, Vol. 6, Introduction, p. XXXI



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molestation on the Continent, and its first performance in English at the Berkeley Lyceum, New York, January 5, 1894 was pronounced by W.D. Howells, "a great theatrical event - the very greatest I have ever known."

From the above facts we see that there were three noted critics who have championed the cause of Ibsen in England: Edmund Gosse in 1872 introduced him to the English public; William Archer translated his plays extensively into English; and when the performance of Ghosts in 1891 called forth an outburst of adverse criticism George Bernard Shaw answered Ibsen's enemies with crushing blows.

Shaw's able defense of the poet could not have been entirely without effect upon the British men of letters, and more particularly upon the theatrical world. Here was a new light; a great, original genius, combined with a perfect master of stagecraft, whose influence was bound to be felt in the modern British drama. Among the rising generation of dramatists in England at this time was a young man who was destined to become one of the leading modern dramatic writers of Britain; a prolific playwright, whose output includes more than fifty plays, and three volumes on the drama and the theater-Henry Arthur Jones. Very early in his career, before he wrote plays independently, Jones came under the influence of Ibsen. In 1880,

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1. The Collected Works of Henrik Ibsen, Introduction, pp. XXIII and XXIV.
2. In his book, The Foundations of a National Drama, Chapter XIII, p. 208, Jones says: "When I came up to London sixteen years ago, to try for a place among English playwrights, a rough translation from the German version of A Doll's House was put into my hands, and I was told that if it could be turned into a sympathetic play, a ready opening would be found for it on the London boards. I knew nothing of Ibsen, but I knew a great deal of Robertson and H. J. Byron. From these circumstances came the adaptation called Breaking a Butterfly." Since the above quotation was written in December, 1896, it must have been 1880 that Jones wrote this adaptation from Ibsen's A Doll's House.





two years prior to the appearance of The Silver King, the melodrama which made the author famous on four continents where the English language is spoken,<sup>1</sup> Jones wrote in collaboration with Henry Herman,<sup>2</sup> Breaking a Butterfly, an adaptation of Ibsen's A Doll's House.<sup>3</sup> It is worth mention here not for its own merits but merely because it is the first adaptation of Ibsen into English. From this we see, that Jones was the first dramatist who put on the English stage an adaptation of Ibsen, just as Gosse had been the first to make his name known in England, William Archer the first author to translate one of his plays.

However, these efforts were crowned with very little success in Great Britain, since the English were, and still are, slow to recognize the greatness of Ibsen's peculiar genius.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, this fact did not discourage his earnest admirers. With the exception of Catiline and two early plays of minor importance, the works of the Norwegian dramatist have been translated into English by able men and women. Chief among these is unquestionably William Archer, who has spent the best efforts of his life in bringing Ibsen nearer to the English-speaking public. Since only his twelve social plays will be considered in this discussion, these alone will receive notice here.

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1. Barrett H. Clark, The British and American Drama of To-day, p. 36.
  2. See note 2, p. 4.
  3. In a letter dated March 2, 1917, written to Mr. Drury, the assistant librarian of the University of Illinois, Mr. H.A. Jones says: "I regret I have not a copy of Breaking a Butterfly. It is a quite conventional early work, an adaptation of Ibsen's A Doll's House written before The Silver King--It is only worth notice as the first adaptation into English of Ibsen. (See my note in the Filon essay in my Foundations of a National Drama.)" See also William Archer: About the Theatre, p. 48.
  4. A Henderson, European Dramatists, p. 77.



William Archer translated The Pillars of Society, A Doll's House, Ghosts, Little Eyolf, John Gabriel Borkman, When We Dead Awaken, Hedda Gabler, and The Master Builder. The two latter plays have also been translated by Edmund Gosse. The Enemy of the People has been translated by Eleanor Marsaveling, who also rendered The Lady from the Sea, with critical introduction by Edmund Gosse.<sup>1</sup> (London 1890.) Mrs. Frances E. Archer translated The Wild Duck, and in addition, The Lady from the Sea, while to Charles Archer<sup>2</sup> we are indebted for the rendition of Rosmersholm.

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1. Henrik Ibsen's Samlede Vaerker, Copenhagen, 1898.
  2. The dramas have been edited by William Archer and are included in his eleven volumes of The Collected Works of Henrik Ibsen, copyright edition, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1913.







## CHAPTER II

## REMARKS ON IBSEN

The distinction of revolutionizing thought has been achieved by few individuals, even among the truly great. Although the lack of perspective precludes any predictions as to the extent and the permanency of Ibsen's influence on contemporary thought, and its resultant contribution to the mental, moral and spiritual development of the human race in its onward march toward perfection, yet we must concede that his mighty intellect and original genius have indisputably won for him the place of a world poet, to whom no world interest was alien. According to Matthew Arnold, a piece of literature, in order to be great, must be a criticism of life. Not even Ibsen's enemies will deny that his powerful dramas are a criticism of life - one might almost say an indictment of life. And surely, he has given us some great plays, some great characters. Ibsen had a message for his age, and this message he proclaimed from his pulpit - the stage, with an earnestness and an uncompromising devotion to truth that challenge our admiration. Henderson says: "It has been said that the drama can never be the same again, now that Ibsen has lived and written. It may be said that the world can never be the same again, since Ibsen has lived and written."

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1 A. Henderson, European Dramatists, p. 82



To Ibsen have been ascribed many creeds; and it is not easy to ascertain his exact attitude, or rather, his philosophy of life. It has been said in turn that he is a realist, an idealist, a naturalist, a pessimist, an optimist, a conservative, a radical, a symbolist,<sup>1</sup> a mystic; he has even been accused of being a preacher of anarchism. Let us hear Ibsen himself speak: "I have sometimes been called a pessimist: and indeed I am one, inasmuch as I do not believe in the eternity of human ideals. But I am also an optimist, inasmuch as I fully and confidently believe in the ideals' power of propagation and development."<sup>2</sup> Aside from his achievement as a literary artist, it is this faith in the possibility of man to reach higher and ever higher, this belief in a third kingdom, that makes Ibsen one of the greatest forces in modern literature. This, and his ceaseless and relentless prosecution of all shams, lies and hypocrisies, and his unswerving devotion to truth, have enabled him to exert such a wholesome influence upon the lives of his people and upon the world in general. He hated everything that hindered the free development of the individual, everything that stunted the noble mind and soul of man, and insisted that the rights of the individual are supreme, and that they are not to be set aside for any other claims, not even for the claims of duty, traditions, and conventions. He held that modern society is largely founded upon lies and hypocrisies. Just as the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath, so society was made for man and not man for society. However, reformers received little encouragement<sup>3</sup> from Ibsen, for he had no faith in political and social revolutions. He believed in but one kind of revolution, and that is the revolution

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1 J. G. Huneker, Iconoclasts, p. 2

2 W. Archer's Collected Works of Ibsen, Introduction p. XVI. See also G. Brandes, Die Literature, Essay on Henrik Ibsen, p. 80

3 Georg Brandes, Ibsen and Björnson, p. 63





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1 of the spirit. He had a boundless faith in the spirit of man. He  
believed that an unconquerable power, a mighty soul sleeps in every  
human being, and that this soul is human-sent and not of superhuman  
origin, therefore man has a right to live his life according to his  
personal creed, and to develop his individuality for his own sake of  
higher powers.<sup>3</sup> Thus Ibsen becomes the great champion of individual-  
ism, and every barrier in the way of free development of the in-  
dividual he would destroy, every obstacle he would remove in order  
that the superman may become a reality. Hence his faith in the  
single great personality, his belief in the minority and his distrust  
of the majority. The individual alone can do everything.<sup>4</sup> Society,  
with its prejudices, religious cant, shams, hypocrisies, and lies,  
hampers the natural growth of the individual. Therefore it was  
against society, with all that this word implies, that he waged re-  
lentless warfare.<sup>5</sup> He was a born fighter, and always remained  
loyal to the principles of truth and honesty. One of his admirers  
said: "Bury him with princely honors, this dead poet, and lay three  
things upon his bier:

6  
A crown, a hammer, and a sword!"

However, we can hardly call Ibsen a preacher. He says he  
does not preach, says it over and over again: "Mein Amt ist Fragen,  
nicht Bescheid zu geben."<sup>7</sup> He is not interested in society, he is,

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- 1 George Brandes, Ibsen & Bjornson, p. 55-56.
- 2 James Huneker's Iconoclasts, p. 2-3 ( See below X)
- 3 Georg Brandes, Ibsen & Bjornson, p. 61-62. See also B. H. Clark's The Continental Drama of Today, p. 18
- 4 Georg Brandes, Ibsen & Bjornson, p. 57
- 5 "Yet the surface pessimism of his plays conceals a mighty be-  
lief in the ultimate goodness of mankind."
- 6 Ashley Dukes', Modern Dramatists, p. 29
- 7 In Die Literatur, Essay on Henrik Ibsen, p. 64





above everything else, a dramatist interested in human beings, and in his plays he merely presents people. But since people live in society, and are largely the product of society, he had to present them in this frame-work, as it were. And a great drama he sees these people play, human beings with a will to do, cheated of their birthright by the forces of heredity and environment, by the rules and regulations of an antiquated and stagnant society, struggling in vain against these forces to assert their inalienable right to live their life, to be themselves. Ibsen, too, saw that man is born free<sup>1</sup> and he is everywhere in chains, and he saw with a clear vision: "Will, even though your will be disastrous in its outcome, but will, he insists; and yet demonstrates that only through self-surrender can come complete self-realization. To say 'I am what I am' is the Ibsen 'credo'; but this 'I' must be tested in the fire of self abnegation."<sup>2</sup> He is a dynamic grumbler, says the same critic, and at the same time he points out that the burden of Ibsen's message is: Good must prevail in the end.<sup>3</sup> To attain full self-realization, therefore, the Ego must be tested in the fire of self-abnegation - the old doctrine of: Whosoever loses his life shall save it. "The stage is Ibsen's pulpit, but he is first an artist; his moral, as in all great dramas, is implicit."<sup>4</sup> Ibsen himself said that his business<sup>5</sup> is to diagnose the disease, and not to suggest a remedy.

In writing his dramas, then, Ibsen was primarily con-

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- 1 A. Wullermehrer, Pages Choiesies, II, Du Contrat Social, Chap. 1. p. 33. "L'homme est né libre, et partout il est dans les fers."  
 2 J. G. Huneker, Iconoclasts, p. 13  
 3 Ibid., p. 12  
 4 Ibid., p. 14  
 5 This discussion is limited to the most important of his social dramas.





cerned in creating a piece of art. French stagecraft and German philosophy have made their influence felt upon Ibsen. But during his long years of apprenticeship he formulated a philosophy of his own, and acquired a perfection of technique that has scarcely been equaled much less surpassed.<sup>1</sup> It may be said that his technique is faultless. He practised the strictest economy in the construction of his plays, and stripped the drama of artificiality; the soliloquy, the asides, the adventitious, the accidental, and the psychologically impossible he practically banished from the stage. His characters are never the plaything of mere chance happenings. Everything is logically accounted for. He rarely makes use of servants or subordinate characters for the exposition of the play. There is a natural unfolding of events without the artificial device of the confidant or the raisonneur. Ibsen had no use for nonessentials. Even the scene had to be discarded. Henderson says: "The supreme technical achievement of Ibsen, one may fairly say his supreme technical innovation, has been the identification of the action with the exposition."<sup>2</sup> It was due to the scientific spirit of the age that Ibsen turned away from the purely synthetic treatment, or rather a blending of both in most cases as far as his twelve social dramas are concerned. In one of these alone he employs the synthetic treatment, "The Enemy of the People", in four the purely analytic; these are "Ghosts", "The Wild Duck", "Rosmersholm", and "John Gabriel Borkman." This new type of exposition is called explication, or the drama of ripened situation.<sup>3</sup> As in the case of the classic Greek

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1 B. H. Clark, The Continental Drama of Today, pp. 17-18

2 A. Henderson, The Changing Drama, p. 75

3 Ibid., p. 76



drama, most of Ibsen's tragedies begin in the middle, or toward the end of a great crisis in the life of his hero or heroine, this crisis being the culmination of past action, needs but some slight event to precipitate the inevitable catastrophe, and what we witness is the characters rushing headlong to their doom.<sup>1</sup> Thus the first act begins with the end of the story - the catastrophe, and we see but the last part of it - sometimes the plays have no end. But, unlike the Greek tragedies, the antecedent events are entirely unknown to the audience. The Greek dramatist had the Prologue to recall the facts that were common knowledge in his age. Ibsen unravels the retrospective history by means of narration in dialogue form.<sup>2</sup> The audience is thus subjected to a double suspense, and the interest in the past action supersedes that of the actual drama itself.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, Ibsen has utilized the three unities, so closely adhered to by the Greeks, in several of his social dramas. There is seldom a change of locality,<sup>4</sup> and the time consumed by the action ranges from three to thrice twenty hours.<sup>5</sup> This compactness is indispensable to produce Ibsen's fourth unity, the unity of tone or mood, the unity of impression. So compact is his structure that the removal of a passage, or even a sentence, would interfere with the organic whole. Hence the continuous and concentrated attention of the audience is imperative.<sup>6</sup> He observes this same economy in his dialogues, which are always natural

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- 1 W. Archer, Playmaking, p. 99. Also A. Henderson, The Changing Drama, p. 78  
 2 A. Henderson, The Changing Drama, p. 79  
 3 Ibid., p. 79  
 4 Ibid., p. 67: Henderson says: "With only this exception," referring to the change of scene from the coast to the mountains, "which from its nature cannot be regarded as a real exception, unity of place is preserved in all of Ibsen's social dramas. There is a change of immediate place wherever occasion demands; never a change of locality."  
 5 A. Henderson, The Changing Drama, p. 66  
 6 Ibid., p. 193





but never commonplace.

Life was Ibsen's stage. His characters are real people of his day, placed in natural situations in the present time. He has almost exclusively confined himself to depicting Norwegians, mostly those of the middle class. These are natural, although often unusual people. He leans toward the treatment of city types. The scene of action is Norway. We must remember, however, his dramas are national in the same sense that the Homeric poems, and the stage of Shakespeare and Molière are national. They reflect the spirit and the civilization of our age. Ibsen, too, is universal in that he has represented the elemental powers of old in the light of new ideas and new ideals. That is the explanation, fundamentally, that the difference between "Oedipus, the King", and "Ghosts" is not so great. To be sure, the pity and terror which "Ghosts" arouse are not the same which the Attic tragedy aroused in the spectator of ancient Greece. The latter witnessed the sufferings of a human being who was the mere plaything of an inexorable master - Fate - while we see the sufferings of an individual who has been the victim of a relentless power - heredity - nevertheless, a power which is within the possibility of man to control. Thus, the responsibility and guilt are placed on man, and since man is a component part of society, on society. However, the elements of tragedy in both cases are the same. Instead of the legendary hero, and the hero king we have the professional man, and the captain of industry; the house of Pelops must make place for the house of Bernick, and the Stockmanns. The new woman has become a new factor in the drama, and the Phaedras must make place for the

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1 The two exceptions are the Strange in the Lady from the Sea, and Mrs. Wilton in John Gabriel Borkman.





Noras, and the Heddas. The tragedy of middle-class life has become a reality.

Although the social dramas of Ibsen have a theme, and deal with social problems, he did not approve of propaganda as an artistic aim.<sup>1</sup> Henderson says: "Ibsen never permits his characters to discuss ideas of life save as a means of exhibiting an indispensable phase of character or forwarding the dramatic movement of the piece."<sup>2</sup> The same author observes that great intellectual men raise whole strata of society to their intellectual and emotional level, and Ibsen was no exception.<sup>3</sup> He is not a thesis dramatist, for he never desired to prove anything. He only put into his dramas what he himself had lived through. The origin of most of his plays can be traced to some general idea or ideas, but he never made them the sole end of his dramas; on the contrary, they are "artistic creations of human experience in the light of some general idea or ideas."<sup>4</sup> Back of these Ibsen plays one feels the presence of a powerful intellect, a great personality; his is truly the drama of intellectual content, the drama of "awakening." It is with problems of psychology and morality that he is mostly occupied, since these play such a great part in the destiny of human beings, fated to live in a ready-made world by the dictates of ideas and ideals which had their origin in the dead past. Hence the ever recurring conflict between the new and the old individualized in his plays. It is not the clash of ideas and ideals that fascinates us, but the heart and the soul struggles of real, living human beings. This is why we read and re-read his dramas. We learn to know Ibsen, the thinker, the artist, and the dramatist, and life has a new meaning for us.

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1 A. Henderson, The Changing Drama, p. 100

2 Ibid., 135

3 Ibid., 168

4 Ibid., 93





## CHAPTER III.

## DISCUSSION OF HIS MORE IMPORTANT SOCIAL PLAYS

"The Pillars of Society" is the product of a mature mind.<sup>1</sup> Ibsen was now forty-nine years old. In turning to the serious drama, he realized that he had to do pioneer work. To picture real modern life he had to give truth the right of way. But truth is sometimes ugly, and often unpopular. This did not dismay him, however, and he gave social hypocrisy a staggering blow. At this time he was not fully emancipated, and still resorted to some of the tools of the conventional French school. "The Pillars of Society" is not free from the melodramatic elements; plot still predominates over character; interest centers in vivid action, and not in the soul of man, as in his later dramas. The traditional villain and the confidant are also found in this play, that is, in a modified form.<sup>2</sup> In fact, it has been termed a melodrama of morals. The number of characters, nineteen, is also larger than in his other social plays. His next one, "The Doll's House," has only nine, and his third, "Ghosts", only five characters. In addition, these two plays have only three acts each while "The Pillars of Society" has four. Moreover, the semi-retrospective history is made known to the audience by means of a group of gossiping women, all subordinate characters, who disclose in snatches of conversation, the scandal in the Bernick family. Ibsen had to introduce a stranger in

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1. The Pillars of Society was written in 1877.

2. A. Henderson, European Dramatists, p. 122.



their midst, whose sole function in the play is to make this exposition possible. In "A Doll's House" there is a marked improvement in this direction. A friend of Nora's, after years of absence, visits her, and in their reminiscent conversation the necessary retrospective action is disclosed. But with "Ghosts" Ibsen had perfected his technique. The retrospective action becomes the drama itself. No artificial device is required in the treatment of this tragedy.

The whole action of "The Pillars of Society" takes place in one room in the house of Consul Bernick, the time consumed is about sixty hours.<sup>1</sup> In the first act the action is rather slow. We hardly suspect the theme, or problem, but in the second act it is sent home with telling force. The impression we get of Bernick in the first act is that of a shrewd, enterprising, patronizing business man, conscious of his own importance; in the second we see a selfish hypocrite, lost to all sense of honor, who had sacrificed love and friendship with cold-blooded egoism. The past history hinted at in act I is brought in the two big scenes, and, to the surprise of the audience, Bernick is unmasked; he, not Johan, is the moral transgressor. He had climbed the ladder of success by means of lies. He had lied to his wife Betty, he had lied to Lona, the woman he loved, he had lied to Johan, his friend. His whole life was a lie. Lona flings at him "So you saved the house of Bernick at the expense of a woman".<sup>2</sup> Then he poses as a benefactor, and says he did it for the welfare of the community. In the third act he plays the part of a gambler in high finance, together with several other "pillars of society". Bernick pleads not guilty by insisting

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1. A. Henderson, The Changing Drama, p. 66

2. Act II, p. 316, line 6.







that society forces him to this dishonest transaction. Johan is an individualist; when his own happiness depends upon his regaining his name and reputation, he demands that Bernick restore them to him. Then, the benevolent hypocrite resolves upon a crime to extricate himself from his difficulties, and chance alone saves him from becoming a criminal. During this act more past history has been revealed. In the last act, urged by the unselfish, noble Lona to free himself from the bondage of lies, this contemptible villain is suddenly transformed into an honest man by a public confession of his sins to a delegation of townsmen, who had assembled to honor their leading citizen, financier, and public spirited benefactor. The closing words, proclaiming the spirit of truth and freedom as the real pillars of society, are not entirely free from propaganda. On the whole the play has rather a spectacular ending.

A large number of characters - often a source of confusion to the spectators - vivid action, misrepresentation, intrigue, wickedness, the final triumph of Good over Evil - all are elements of the melodrama. However, the technique of "The Pillars of Society" contains none of the artificial devices of the melodrama; extravagant scenes, the soliloquies, the asides, the overhearing, important letters secretly overread by the wrong persons, are absent. Nothing depends on chance. The characters, too, are life-like; the leading as well as the subsidiary persons are well drawn, and true to life. Bernick, the self-deceiving hypocrite, the arrogant, overbearing, unchristian rector, Rörlund, the self-appointed standard bearer of the ideal, Hilmar, the unselfish Martha, Dina, the new woman in the making, noble Lona, and Aune, the tool of the firm of Bernick, are no traditional stock characters, dressed in the garb of modern times, but real people, breathing the air we breathe,



experiencing the same emotions, and speaking the same language we speak, stripped of the commonplace. In this one respect, at least, "The Pillars of Society" differs from the Scribe-type of the well made play. Not even the making-everything-right at the end is missing: the reformation of the unscrupulous Bernick, the conversion of Anne to the use of new machinery, the recovery of Olaf, the delay in the departure of "The Indian Girl", the timely allaying of the winds for the safe journey of Johan and Dina to America. The "eternal triangle", which appears so frequently in Ibsen's social plays, is also present in "The Pillars of Society", but it does not lead to the inevitably disastrous conclusion, as in his later serious dramas. Lona fully forgives her lover for marrying her step-sister out of financial considerations.

In "The Pillars of Society" Ibsen exposed the shams, lies, and hypocrisies, upon which modern society is partly based. In "A Doll's House" he denounced the practice of contracting marriages founded upon lies. True, happy marriages have a spiritual, not a material bond of union. This idea is sent home with tremendous force in the second half of the last act. All that has gone before is mere preparation for this big, final scene. Nora is an individual and as such has certain inalienable rights, of which nothing, not even the duties of marriage, her duty to her husband and children, can deprive her; for her first duty is to herself - not for her own sake, to be sure, but for the sake of mankind. Two acts and one half are taken up with the exposition of bygone facts. The action, therefore, is semi-retrospective. Again Ibsen resorted to theatrical devices, but with less dependence upon the French school. He made use of two stock-characters, the confidant,







and the villain, both, however, are so transfigured by Ibsen's own genius that they have little resemblance to the traditional confidant and villain. Mrs. Linden is employed in the first act as a confidential listener to Nora's talk about her marriage. In this dialogue are disclosed important retrospective happenings which the spectator must know in order to understand the situation. Later on this confidant becomes the chief resolving force. She prevents Krogstad, the villain, from carrying out his threats of exposing Nora's crime. This villain, we are made to feel, is a victim of his environment, and, under different circumstances would have been a rather decent fellow. Additional elements of the melodrama are: the ironic coincidence of Mrs. Linden's visiting Nora, after years of separation, shortly before Krogstad comes to her, resolved to expose her forgery; the atmosphere of festivity that permeates the whole play up to the catastrophe; the Christmas tree, the tarantella, the masked ball, the gay music in the distance; the character of Nora; the frolicksome scene with the children, contrasting most effectively with the tragic outcome, the ghostly spectator of heredity, in the person of Dr. Rank, stalking about in this house, teeming with life and gaiety - all savors, more or less, of the melodramatic. However, instead of the conventional ending Ibsen asserted his independence and allowed the inevitable to happen, and the modern drama was born. The scene for mere theatrical effect had to make room for the scene of dramatic power, the conclusion that meets the approval of the public, for the conclusion that satisfies the necessity of logic. The ending of "A Doll's House" is not only new in drama, but very effective; it leaves us wondering. It is a kind of leaving off, rather than an end.



The play is more compact than "The Pillars of Society".

There are only three acts; the time taken up by the action is approximately the same, sixty hours. In addition, the plot is much simpler. Without realizing the gravity of the offense a young wife, Nora Helmer, commits forgery to save the life of her husband. Petted and spoiled by her father and her husband, she has become a frivolous and irresponsible woman. For eight years she has been able to conceal her crime, but when she can hide it no longer, and Helmer learns the truth about the affair, he says, "What an awful awakening! During all these eight years she was my pride and my joy - a hypocrite, a liar - worse, worse - criminal", and, "all your father's want of principle you have inherited - no religion,<sup>1</sup> no morality, no sense of duty.." She is not fit to be his wife and the mother of his children. However, the greatest awakening was on her part. She thought that he would take the blame upon himself. But the miracle did not happen. At this moment Krogstad's letter containing the forged note arrives, and Helmer is saved. But Nora, too, is saved. She realizes that her marriage has been a lie, and through the open door, the symbol of freedom, she triumphs over the forces of heredity and environment, and social conventions. Nora the doll is changed to Nora the human being, resolved to defy the laws of society, to assert her rights as an individual. There is an echo of tragedy in this ending.

In "Ghosts" Ibsen's attack upon the false ideal of marriage is even more relentless and more crushing than in "A Doll's House". In the latter marriage stood in the way of Nora's free

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1. Act III, p. 136.







development. In "Ghosts" Mrs. Alving surrenders her individuality and lives a lie in marriage. The right of a human being to happiness is denied her; she must find happiness in duty. The doctrine of renunciation is imposed upon her by the clergyman, her former lover, Pastor Manders. But the consequences prove that this doctrine is false. The story is simple and centers about the character of Mrs. Alving. In unfolding this tale of horror, Ibsen has employed the retrospective method of the Greek tragedy. The three unities are observed; the number of characters is only five. The cause of the tragedy dates back twenty years before the play begins, and what we see is merely the dramatization of an effect. The part of the plot that took place before the curtain rises is scattered through the entire drama, and the tension is not relaxed for a moment during the three acts; it extends even beyond the fall of the curtain in the last act. The exposition of the past history of Mrs. Alving constitutes almost the whole play. Persuaded to contract a marriage of convenience, she finds that her life is intolerable in the home of her dissolute husband, Captain Alving, and she seeks protection from her former lover, Pastor Manders, who, duly guided by a prescribed social and moral code, sends her back to her inhuman husband. She follows the advice of her spiritual counselor, and this is her unpardonable mistake; the retribution is terrible. The penalty must be paid. But she is not the only sufferer. The sins of Captain Alving are visited upon their innocent son, Oswald. To cover more securely the lie she had lived, she erects with Alving's fortune an orphanage as a memorial to his "noble and beneficent" character. Oswald, who has been banished from home, by his mother, since his childhood on account of his father's shameful conduct,



returns from Paris, where he had been studying art, in order to attend its dedication. He makes love to his step-sister, Regina, who is a servant in the Alving home, at the same place, in the same way as his father had made love to her mother twenty years before. Mrs. Alving sees it just as she did the similar scene of long ago and cries out, horrified, "Ghosts! The couple of the conservatory has risen again!"<sup>1</sup> The accumulation of tragic events in the last two acts is almost appalling. The revelation of Oswald's condition, the burning of the orphanage, Mrs. Alving's forced confession, and the final catastrophe, the terrible end is simply overwhelming. There is nothing in these tragic incidents, with the possible exception of the conflagration, that even suggests the melodramatic. The plot is a logical result of previous action, and the tragic story is not acted out on the stage, but in the minds of the characters, revealed to the audience by means of a series of dialogues. No tricks of the theatre are resorted to. Action is reduced to the minimum. Huneker says, "The Ibsen plays are character symphonies."<sup>2</sup> One feels that Ibsen had something to say to the world in this drama. One writer remarked that the conversations between Manders and Mrs. Alving are weighed down with personal philosophizing. The characters, with the exception of Manders, are drawn from life; they are individuals not types. Mrs. Alving forms a marked contrast to Nora. She is an intellectual woman and not a doll, yet she did not have the strength and fortitude to defy the conventions of society as Nora has done. She represents the idea of "Opferwille"

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1. Act I, p. 214.

2. James Huneker, Iconoclasts, p. 5







while Nora stands for the idea of the free development of the individual, the two "grundmotives" in the Ibsen dramas. Engstrand is an unscrupulous hypocrite, and Regina, selfish and heartless, has inherited her parents' lack of morality. Manders is the traditional type of clergyman, a second cousin of Rector Rörland, and Oswald's character is rather shadowy. In "The Pillars of Society" the conflict is in the soul of Bernick; it is a struggle between truth and falsehood. In "A Doll's House" Nora's struggle is against the obstacles of heredity, environment, and marriage, and the individual will is triumphant. But in "Ghosts" there is no struggling against obstacles. Mrs. Alving is the victim of false ideals, and Oswald is the victim of heredity. Still "Ghosts" is a powerful drama.

"An Enemy of the People" is the most polemical of all Ibsen's social dramas. It is an answer to the criticism with which "Ghosts" was received, that by the Norwegian Liberal press, and the "compact majority" it represented.<sup>2</sup> As the preceding plays, it portrays the life of the middle class. "The typical bourgeois drama of to-day, the forerunner of countless others cut after the same pattern, is Ibsen's "An Enemy of the People." Back of Stockmann seems to loom a vast impersonal force, the consciousness of social obligation. We live to-day in an era of social democracy. It is no longer the individual, but the social forces that he represents, which constitute the dominant influence in the higher dramas of our time."<sup>3</sup> It is an attack upon the hypocrisy and cowardice of the "compact majority". As in "The Pillars of Society" the

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1. Ibsen's Samtliche Werker, Vol. 6, Introduction.

2. W. Archer, The Collected Works of Henrik Ibsen, Vol. 8, Introduction pp. VIII-IX.

3. A. Henderson, The Changing Drama, pp. 277-278



moral is too evident. Ibsen's belief that the minority is always right is given full expression in this play. The mass is always governed by the few intellectually superior men. But these are always fifteen to twenty years ahead of the average intelligence of the masses; for a truth never lives longer than twenty years at most. Dr. Stockmann, the hero, speaks for Ibsen in "An Enemy of the People". The humor throughout the five acts of the drama, takes away the sharp edge in the arraignment of the selfishness and the corruptness of the "compact majority". It is the story of a public-spirited reformer and idealist in conflict with society and the world. The setting is laid in a small health resort on the southern coast of Norway. The dramatic action consumes less than two days. It is hardly retrospective at all, the whole action being presented on the stage. Usually, there is really little done on the Ibsen stage; nearly all is accomplished by means of dialogue, simple, natural, not literary and oratorical dialogue. In "An Enemy of the People" there is vivid action. The five acts picture a crisis in the life of the hero, his sudden fall from honor, prosperity, and happiness to poverty and disgrace. The turbulent speech-making scene takes up nearly the entire fourth act. Even the scene in the fifth act, in which Stockmann chases Hovstad and Aslaksen around the table with an umbrella, threatening to give them a sound thrashing, is too realistically executed to be melodramatic. No concessions are made to the theatrical. With eleven characters and a mob Ibsen describes for us a vivid scene from life. The plot or story is very simple.

Dr. Stockmann discovers that the water system of the Baths is infected with death-bringing disease germs. He rejoices







greatly over this discovery and expects confidently that the people of the town will be jubilant when he reveals this secret to them, and that they will hail him as a public benefactor. He meets with unexpected opposition on the part of the monied interest, but relies securely on the "compact majority" for support. However, out of mercenary consideration, the crowd joins with the privileged class, and the two conspire to impose silence upon the zealous reformer. In a speech, Stockmann tries to win a hearing. His outspoken manner is as unacceptable to the mob as the truth itself, and he barely escapes with his life. Thus, the privileged few with the help of a subsidized press and the corruptible masses have once more defeated truth. But Dr. Stockmann is undaunted by this abuse and ostracism. He remains in the town, resolved to conquer in the end, at the very place where he has been reviled as an enemy of the people. His experience has led to a great discovery. He says at the close of the act, "This is what I have discovered, you see: the strongest man in the world is he who stands most <sup>1</sup> alone." He still believes in the ideal, and devotes his life to the task of educating people to be free and high-minded men, and he is willing to begin with the street urchins and the ragamuffins. This he is going to do single-handed and alone.

The exposition in "An Enemy of the People" is clear and concise; no superfluous characters are introduced for merely expository purpose. Conventional types also are absent. Ibsen is now the technician. Each character is strongly individualized, and represents social groups, with the exception of the public-spirited idealist, Stockmann, in conflict with these groups.

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1. Vol. 8, p. 188



"The Wild Duck" is the last of Ibsen's distinctly socio-<sup>1</sup>logical dramas. Henderson says, "From this time forward, Ibsen's plays concern themselves less and less with society, more and more with individual problems of character and conscience." It is one of the most pessimistic of his social plays; it is a drama of family life. In "An Enemy of the People" disaster befalls the hero because he insists upon telling the truth and harangues public dishonesty, in "The Wild Duck" Gregers Werle brings disaster upon a family because he insists on telling the truth and exposes the lie upon which the happiness of the Ekdal family is founded. The truth is a medicine that cannot be administered promiscuously to everybody alike; for the average mortal thrives better on illusions than on the truth. When Dr. Relling tries to open Gregers' eyes as to the nonsense of "the claim of the ideal," the latter says, "If you are right and I am wrong, then life is not worth living."<sup>2</sup> "An Enemy of the People" is merely a chapter from life, while "The Wild Duck" is an entire book from life. There are fifteen characters besides six nameless gentlemen and seven servants. The time covers about forty hours. The scene in the first act is laid in the Werle home, those of the remaining four at the house of Ekdal. There is little external action. Throughout the play the past is gradually unraveled, and simultaneous with the revelation of the retrospective action by means of dialogues is the revelation of character. As in the conventional French dramas, the servants set the plot in motion. Then the leading characters take it up and carry the story to the end. The story is simple.

Old Werle, a wealthy merchant, has led a merry life in

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1. F.W. Chandler, Aspects of Modern Drama, pp. 135-136
  2. The Wild Duck, Act V, p. 400.





his day, and, although going blind, he resolves to marry his house-keeper. He had played a trick upon his former partner, Ekdal, which resulted in the latter's imprisonment. In addition, he has wronged the son, Hjalmer Ekdal, by bringing about a marriage between him and Werle's servant, Gina, in order to avert a scandal. Gregers, whose home life was made miserable by his father's conduct, conceives the idea that his life's mission is to bring to light this lie in the married life of his college friend, Hjalmer, and with this in mind he rents a room in the Ekdal home. But the family is happy in spite of the lie. Gina and their supposed child, little Hedwig, manage the home and practically make the living, while the lazy, selfish, and ideal-worshipping Hjalmer, lounges around dreaming about doing great things in the world and never getting beyond dreaming. Now, the approaching blindness of Hedwig and the deed of gift for her after old Ekdal's death are proofs that Gregers' accusation against Gina is no fiction, and Hjalmer is convinced that he is the most abused man in the world. He does not spare his wife, and by his cruel treatment and Gregers' subtle suggestions poor Hedwig is driven to suicide. The end is very effective dramatically, and would be more so if the curtain fell after Gina's speech over the body of the unfortunate girl: "We must help each other to bear it. For now at least she belongs to both of us."<sup>1</sup>

The characters of this drama are taken from everyday life. There is not one that can be classed as a type. Hjalmer is one of the most contemptible heroes in literature. He has scarcely a redeeming trait. Relling says of him in regard to his extravagant

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1. Vol. 8, p. 398.



expressions of sorrow over Hedwig's death, "Before a year is over little Hedwig will be nothing to him but a pretty theme for declamation". When Gregers protests, he answers, "We will talk of this again when the grass has first withered on her grave. Then you'll hear him spouting about, 'the child too early torn from her father's heart'; then you'll see him steep himself in a syrup of sentiment and self-admiration and self-pity. Just you wait."<sup>1</sup>

Gregers is a kind of visionary lunatic, an autocratic expounder of truth, without the keen perception necessary to distinguish the true from the false. With all his zeal and devotion to the ideal, he can fill but one place in the world and that is "to be the thirteenth at the table". Gina is a prosy character, a woman with rather dull moral perceptions, but with a great deal of practical sense, and a kind heart. We cannot help feeling a lingering sense of regret and pity creeping into our hearts at the pathetic story of little Hedwig, with her sweet character, her blinking eyes, and her devotion to her unworthy father. Mrs. Sörby is very practical; she says, "A woman can't afford to throw herself away." She contracts a marriage with old Werle based on absolute frankness and mutual understanding, and therefore their happiness is assured. In this drama Ibsen has introduced a new element, that of symbolism. The mysterious wounded duck, which he has interwoven into this realistic story, is symbolical of the Ekdal family, wounded by old Werle. According to Chandler it may represent "humanity - "man born of liberty yet condemned to live in servitude and darkness from the weakness of his nature."<sup>2</sup> The remaining seven of his

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1. Vol. 8, p. 340

2. A. Chandler, Aspect of Modern Drama, p. 79.





social dramas are more or less symbolical. In his next play, "Rosmersholm", the symbol is not so pronounced.

"Rosmersholm" is a sort of link between the sociological and the psychological series of Ibsen's social dramas. It is distinctly transitional in character; for the political conflicts as well as the social ideals form merely a background or frame to set off a picture of intense human interest. It is the tragic fate of the "eternal triangle" that fascinates the spectator. This play<sup>1</sup> is the most difficult of the poet's works to understand. Huneker suggests as the theme, "the self-deceptions of the man and the woman who disregarded the natural law and worldly wisdom ruined their lives." While Henderson says it is "the struggle to bring one's life into conformity with one's ideals - the old Ibsen struggle for self-realization." He adds "and fundamentally, the play does not so much point a conclusive moral, as exhibit a drama of the struggle of human souls, a picture of fainting and aspiring humanity."<sup>2</sup> Rosmer cannot get away from the Rosmer ideals; the political, religious, and social traditions of a dead past shape his destiny. Rebecca, too, cannot escape the clutches of heredity. Both go to their doom because they cannot reconcile themselves with their environment.<sup>3</sup> The ancestral spirit of the house of Rosmer has conquered the new spirit in its struggle to assert itself.

In point of technique also "Rosmersholm" resembles "Ghosts". The main action has already taken place before the rise

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1. James Huneker, Iconoclasts, p. 94
  2. A. Henderson, European Dramatists, p. 138.
  3. Ibid., p. 142



of the curtain, consequently very little goes on on the stage. By means of dialogue the recessive action is gradually disclosed, and what we see is the catastrophe only, the end of a story acted out in the past. The exposition is very natural. The plot is set in motion by the conversation between Rebecca and the housekeeper, but immediately the thread is transferred from the servant to one of the leading characters, Rector Kroll. To the end, no artificial means are resorted to in exposition. In addition, the characters are few, six only. The dramatic action throughout the four acts takes place in two different rooms of the old manor house of Rosmersholm, and outside on the old bridge of the family estate, Rosmersholm, situated near a small coast town in western Norway. The time consumed is about fifty-two hours. In the second act Ibsen makes use of the "overhearing", a favorite device of the Scribe-school. But it is so in keeping with Rebecca's artful character that it does not seem at all artificial or theatrical.

Rebecca West is a very complex character. She is a woman with a past, who tries to attain happiness in spite of her questionable character. This she wills very strongly and shrinks from nothing to accomplish her purpose. She is unscrupulous and designing. She secures entrance into the Rosmer home, and makes herself indispensable to Rosmer through her intellectual companionship, and to his wife, Beata, through her feigned sympathy for the unhappy woman. The couple are unhappy in their marriage. By means of the library which Dr. West, her father left her, she converts Rosmer to the new thought, in politics, in religion, and in the new social ideal. He breaks with the faith of his fathers and turns his back





on the conservative party. This leads to some revelations in regard to his wife's suicide. The leader of the Liberal party, Peter Mortensgard, is in possession of a letter written to him by Beata. This letter upsets all Rebecca's plans, and Rosmer is greatly disturbed over its contents, which revealed that Beata knew of his love for Rebecca. He was surprised that their beautiful, pure friendship could be misinterpreted, he does not know how to explain Beata's terrible accusations. She is alive again. His soul is filled with remorse. He had been so happy with Rebecca, planning to emancipate the homes, and to create noble men. His new hold upon the living world begins to waver. But in spite of this he will live his life, shake off his unhappy past, opposing to it a new living reality - by marrying Rebecca, and thus dispelling all thought of Beata. However, she refuses to become his wife, and confesses that she drove Beata to her death. She wanted to free Rosmer's mind of the guilt of his wife's death. She tells him that she came to Rosmersholm with certain dark designs. She was fearless when she came, and free. She knew no scruples. Now her will is broken. She has been ennobled by the Rosmer ideal. Her love for him has been spiritualized. But he has lost faith in her, and asks that she go the same way Beata went to prove that her conversion is sincere. She accepts his challenge, and he is convinced, and goes with her and both plunge into the dark waters of the millrace. The white horses have entered the manorhouse of Rosmersholm.

In "The Pillars of Society" and "An Enemy of the People", Ibsen openly attacked corruption in society; in the former social hypocrisy, in the latter, the false ideals of democracy. In "A Doll's House" and "Ghosts" he attacked the conventional conception



of marriage. In "The Wild Duck" he questions whether truth is always prerequisite to the happiness of the human race, and in "Rosmersholm" he shows us the awful conflicts of human souls, struggling against dark forces over which they have no control - the tragedy of the "eternal triangle". Ibsen teaches that society can only be regenerated through the individual, "the full, free and veracious expression of self through the will."<sup>1</sup> However, the regeneration must come from within and not from without, in order to be effective.<sup>2</sup>

Ibsen has now turned away from the individual struggling with social forces and moral standards prevalent in the world, and pictures the individual struggling against forces within himself. In "The Lady from the Sea" we see again the "eternal triangle"<sup>3</sup>, that is, the triangular plot of husband, wife and a third party. It is one of Ibsen's favorite plots. It is present in "Hedda Gabler", "The Master Builder", "Little Eyolf", "John Gabriel Borkman", and very prominent in "When we Dead Awaken". In "The Lady from the Sea" the elements of poetry and romance are prominent. The mystery of Ellida's character and her connection with the sea, and the sudden appearance of the stranger, appeal strongly to our imagination. Ibsen has already introduced the poetical element in the somber drama "Rosmersholm" in the person of Ulric Brendel. The happy outcome of the conflict of wills makes "The Lady from the Sea" one of Ibsen's most cheerful plays. Ellida is ultimately reconciled to her environment because she is given free choice upon

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1. F.W. Chandler, Aspects of Modern Drama, p. 20
  2. Ibid., p. 24
  3. A. Henderson, European Dramatists, p. 142.





her own responsibility. Her husband grants her the right to cancel her marriage, and she rejects the Stranger, and finds salvation and self-realization in her marriage with Wangel; for "without the spirit of self-surrender free choice will never secure self-realization".<sup>1</sup> The hero, Dr. Wangel, with his commonsense and kind, genial nature, forms a striking contrast to the idealist, the stern priest, Rosmer, who was never known to smile. The third party of the triangle is the mysterious and romantic Stranger who symbolizes the feminine longing for freedom from restraint, and the feminine fear of the unknown.<sup>2</sup> The movement of the main plot in "The Lady from the Sea" is obstructed by the subsidiary plot. In "Hedda Gabler" Ibsen gives us a grim picture of modern life; it is cold, icy realism, unadorned by poetic fancy. In conciseness and economy of treatment it rivals the classic models. Henderson aptly says: "Hedda Gabler" is not a problem play; it is a portrait play; the full-length portrait, in all its cold fascination, of the most repellently attractive woman in the modern drama."<sup>3</sup> This magnificent painting shows a woman at war with her surroundings. Here again we have "the eternal trio". The beautiful, but cold and calculating Hedda, who has inherited nothing but a pair of pistols from her father, an old dissipated general, contracts a marriage of convenience. Her prosaic husband bores her to death; her lover, the "romancing idealist", the morally bankrupt genius, Lövborg, arouses her envy. She cannot see him happy with her old schoolmate, Thea, and deliberately plans his destruction. But in doing so she has set a trap for herself, and rather than fall a victim to the

1. James Huneker, Iconoclasts, p. 97

2. Georg Brandes, Henrik Ibsen and B. Björnson, p. 103

3. A. Henderson, European Dramatists, p. 145



unscrupulous Judge Brack, she kills herself with her father's pistol - and she dies in beauty. She hates the commonplace, and she never could get away from it. She dreams of her lover with "vine leaves in his hair," and he is killed in a drunken brawl in a disreputable place. Chandler <sup>1</sup> suggests that the manuscript written under the inspiration of Thea, and destroyed by Hedda is symbolical of Lövborg's own soul. His evil genius finally conquers his good angel.

Ibsen's next creation is also a great painting, with a strange intermingling of realism and symbolism. The unhappy conditions of Solness' married life is portrayed with all its hopelessness and despair. Then the scene changes. We are in the realm of pure fancy. The mournful, unhappy wife is forgotten, and the artist is alone with his Inspiration. He want to attain the unattainable. Together with Hilda he will build castles in the air. But he cannot endure the dizzy heights and falls to his doom. His helpers and servers have forsaken him. Is it the tragedy of the guilty conscience? <sup>2</sup> The tragedy of the artist who has forced his way to success and fame by crushing those who stood in his way? Huneker has stated the thesis thus, "Ibsen's intention has been to give us, by means of real characters, but in half-allegorical form, the <sup>3</sup> tragedy of a great artist who has passed the prime of life." The whole play is rich in symbolism and symbolic language.

"Little Eyolf" is a drama full of pathos and hope. The little son of Rita and Allmers is a victim of his parents'

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1. F.W. Chandler, Aspects of Modern Drama, p. 79
  2. A. Henderson, European Dramatists, p. 149
  3. James Huneker, Iconoclasts, p. 112





selfishness. The "floating crutch" brings them face to face with their misguided life, and, after a soul-struggle of agonizing remorse over their wasted years, they pick up what remains of their shattered existence and find peace and joy in devoting themselves to the amelioration of the homeless outcasts of their little village. There is no place in the world for the man who idles away his life in sheer dreaming about a great mission in life. He must answer the bugle-call to shoulder the responsibilities of common humanity. It is the old story of "he who loses his life will find it." The gold and green forest is "a symbol of what Rita Allmers brought her husband Alfred, and the resultant misery of a marriage to which the man, through mistaken idealism, had sold himself,"<sup>1</sup> while the Rat-wife symbolizes Death. It is a drama of the soul rather than a drama of action. Rita and Allmers are not the same at the end of the play as they were at the beginning. Here again we have poetry and imagination asserting themselves.

As in "Ghosts", "Rosmersholm", and "The Wild Duck" the main action has taken place before the opening of "John Gabriel Borkman". What we see on the stage is the last tragic hours in the broken life of a business man of great ability. The theme is the same as that of "The Pillars of Society". Borkman is an individualist with a vengeance. He realized his will to possess gold, and sold his birth-right for a mess of pottage. He sacrificed the priceless gift of love on the altar of Mammon, and the retribution is terrible. The last scene in which the two sisters, bitter enemies for years, are reconciled with the words, (Mrs. Borkman) "We

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1. James Huneker, Iconoclasts, p. 7.



twin sister - over him we have loved."- (Ella Rentheim) "We two shadows - over the dead man" - is highly dramatic, and very effective in its haunting beauty. The sisters had not only fought over the lover but also over his son, and they have lost both; Death had claimed the husband, and Life the son, and they are left alone with their memories.

"When We Dead Awaken" is full of echoes of Ibsen's earlier dramas. Its message is: life without love is death. Rubek had renounced love for his art, and too late he sees that he has sacrificed his life to a phantom. He had contracted a conventional marriage in which he only found boredom and weariness. The beautiful but insane Irene appears to him. She had been the inspiration of the best his life had achieved. She, who had loved him with an unselfish devotion, and who had been but an episode in his life, becomes now his judge, and he pleads guilty of placing "the dead clay-image above the happiness of life - of love".<sup>1</sup> Henderson says of this drama, "When We Dead Awaken", Ibsen's sad epilogue, is at once a Calvary and a Resurrection".<sup>2</sup> Too late does the disillusioned artist realize that "Humanity and the soul are more than art".<sup>3</sup> He casts off his life lie and both are caught by an avalanche and hurled from the snowy summit to the dark unknown below. The meaning of the symbolism in this drama is rather complex: art for art's sake is a delusion, art for life's sake - love for life's sake -<sup>4</sup> is a reality. It is also a criticism of Ibsen's own career. He judged himself with the same degree of severity that he judged others.

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1. Vol. II, p. 453

2. A. Henderson, European Dramatists, p. 152

3. F. W. Chandler, Aspects of Modern Drama, p. 27

4. Ibid., p. 79.





## CHAPTER IV

## JONES' EARLY ACQUAINTANCE WITH IBSEN

Jones' career as a playwright began October 13, 1879 with the presentation of "A Clerical Error, a Comedy in one Act", at the Court Theatre, London. William Archer<sup>1</sup> early recognized the dramatic abilities of Jones, and included him in his work, "English Dramatists of Today." This was in 1882, only three years after the performance of the little comedy mentioned above. Even Matthew Arnold<sup>2</sup> recognized his importance as a dramatist. While the other critics in London were occupied with the question, "Who is this Mr. Jones?" the English public answered it for them. The great success of "The Silver King" brought not only fame but also financial independence to the young playwright; for the popularity of this "best of modern melodramas" covered a period of twenty-five years. It was in 1882 that Jones gave to England its first great melodrama. As we shall later see, Jones has never been able to free himself entirely from the influence of the melodrama. But the melodramatic element is especially prominent in the plays produced during the period of his apprenticeship.<sup>3</sup>

Fortunately for the renaissance of the English drama, Jones had a vision other than that of pleasing the public - the vision of founding a national drama that would rank with the best on the Continent. He set about to accomplish this task, seriously and untir-

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1 William Archer, About the Theatre, pp. 46-47

2 The English Stage, A. Filon, transl. by F. Whyte, p. 238

3 Mario Borsa, The English Stage of Today, p. 58



ingly . From this time on his efforts were divided between creating plays and educating the public taste in order that the chasm between the drama and the theatre might be bridged. In this he was successful. Barrett H. Clark says: "Henry Arthur Jones was probably the first, and is indeed the most ardent, champion of modern drama in England. His lectures and essays on the drama and theatre have been of considerable importance and exerted widespread influence over the younger dramatists, serving to reinstate the English drama in a place<sup>1</sup> of honor."

The early introduction of Ibsen in England by Gosse and Archer made it possible for Jones to come under the influence of a new force in the drama at this time. Filon says; "As for Jones, he indeed has followed both the artist and the thinker in Ibsen."<sup>2</sup> He even goes<sup>3</sup> so far as to assert that Jones, in his adaptation of "A Doll's House" in collaboration with Mr. Hermann, has improved the construction of the play in getting rid of Dr. Rank, "who is but an excrescence," and of the love affair of Krogstad and Mrs. Linden, "which is really wanting in commonsense."<sup>4</sup>

In addition to Filon, Hans Teichman in his "Henry Arthur Jones Dramen" has called attention to the Ibsen influence in the plays of Jones. He points out the similarity in theme, in technique,<sup>5</sup> and in characters of some of his plays. Other critics have done the same.

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- 1 Barrett H. Clark, European Theories of the Drama, p. 458  
 2 The English Stage by A. Filon, Transl. by F. Whyte, pp. 295-296  
 3 See Introduction, p. 6  
 4 The English Stage, by A. Filon, Transl. by F. Whyte, p. 296  
 5 Henry Arthur Jones Dramen, Chapter III







Moreover, Jones himself admits that in the consideration of the modern drama Ibsen cannot be overlooked. He says: "No glance at any corner of the modern drama can leave out of sight the ominous figure of Ibsen. A great destroyer; a great creator; a great poet; a great liberator; in his later prose plays he has freed the European drama, not only from the minor conventions of the stage, such as the perfunctory aside and the perfunctory soliloquy, but from the deadlier bondage of sentimentality, of one-eyed optimism, and sham morality. As there is no modern playwright who understands his craft that does not pay homage to Ibsen's technique, so there is no serious modern dramatist who has not been directly or indirectly influenced by him, and whose faith has not been made clearer, and straighter, and easier by Ibsen's matchless veracity, courage and sincerity. Throughout these plays, again and again he shows us how far more poignant and startling are inward spiritual situations and the secret surprises and suspenses of the soul, than outward physical situations and the traps and surprises of mechanical ingenuity...Ibsen for the most part looms darkly through a blizzard, in a wilderness made still more bleak and desolate by the gray lava streams of corrosive irony that have poured from his crater. Yet by this very fact he becomes all the more representative of his age, and of the present cast and drift of European thought and philosophy. His generation has heard and received his insistent new gospel, "Live your own life". But human hearts will always long for that strain of higher mood which we seem to remember "Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.....They honor him who honors the truth and they welcome him who welcomes the growl of the thunder and the dart of the lightning rather than stagnancy and miasma and



the fitful shimmer that dances round corruption...' He will long stand forth, a frowning landmark in the domain of the drama'<sup>1</sup>". This is clearly an admission of his debt to Ibsen.

It seems quite natural that a dramatist of Jones' seriousness and earnestness of purpose should be attracted by the Scandinavian poet, both racially and individually.

Filon explains the reason for Ibsen's early appearance in England. He says that there is an affinity between the Norwegian character and the English, and that is why Ibsen's realism suited the English taste. He says, "Ibsen has brought to the English the form, the kind, and the degree of realism they can put up with."<sup>2</sup> And again he makes this statement, "From a social standpoint, the ulcers which Ibsen cauterizes are the ulcers which eat also into the life of England. That tyranny of the majority, that conventional and machine-like morality which stifle all initiative, that cavilling, degrading charity which is not christian, but sectarian, are all well known to England."<sup>3</sup> According to this same critic Ibsen's characters are adapted to English life. "Were I to pass Ibsen's types in review one by one, I should find it easy to show with what ease they adapt themselves to English life."<sup>4</sup> Pastors Rörland and Manders are first cousins to Bonsy , Portal, and the Bishop in "Whitewashing Julia"; Engstrand, who always bewails his sins and makes a living out of his

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1 The Foundations of a National Drama, pp. 22-24

2 The English Stage, by A. Filon, Transl. by F. Whyte, p. 289

3 Ibid., p. 292

4 Ibid., p. 293







repentance, would immediately recognize in Greenacre his younger brother; Lövborg, the gifted but weak victim of drunkenness is resurrected in the character of Amphiel; Consul Bernick himself would not attempt to deny the strong family resemblance between himself and Joseph Chandler; while Rosmer and Michael could easily be taken for kinsmen. However, Ibsen's women seem ever more at home on English soil. Again Filon says, "But it is English women that Ibsen seems to have divined best of all. Nearly all those demands of the Anglo-Saxon women which evoke so much talk today are contained in germ in the last scene of *A Doll's House*, which dates from 1879. The woman is tired of being a servant and a plaything to the man; she sees herself confronted with responsibilities and duties for which she has had no preparation; she wants to live her own life as a reasoning and thinking being. This note is being re-echoed daily in the Reveiws and on the platforms open to women, and thus Norah's cry is indefinitely prolonged...Women, both the good and the bad, are given traits of character, in Ibsen's dramas, which are common to the Norwegian races."<sup>1</sup> On reading these statements we think immediately of Norah and her resemblance to Jones' dancing girl, Drusilla, of Hedda Gabler and her resemblance to Lady Jessica and Lada Valerie Camville, of Rebecca West and her resemblance to Audrie Lesden and Vashti Dethic. "It is above all," says Filon, "when he is depicting women that he seems to me to be haunted by the memory of the Norwegian's heroines."<sup>2</sup>

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However, among the foremost dramatists of England Jones alone has come decidedly under the influence of the Norwegian. As

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1 The English Stage, A. Filon, transl. by F. Whyte, pp. 293-294

2 Ibid., p. 297

3 Aspects of Modern Drama, F. W. Chandler, pp. 154-155



early as 1880, two years before the appearance of his great melodrama, "The Silver King", we have seen that he wrote an adaptation of Ibsen's "A Doll's House", "The Breaking of a Butterfly". We have also seen how he has substituted the conventional happy ending for its tragic outcome. In this same year (1884) appeared his first play of social reform, "Saints and Sinner", a social satire that clearly shows Ibsen's influence. Like "The Enemy of the people" it is a criticism of middle class hypocrisy and bigotry. This drama and the long list of those that followed it places Jones in the front rank of social reformers in England. "Among the dramatist", says Chandler, "Jones in particular struck with a heavy hand at the self-appointed guardians of morality." <sup>1</sup> Again quoting Filon in regard to Jones' <sup>2</sup> inspiration through Ibsen: "Mr. Jones has been much happier when inspired by Ibsen than when he has translated him...It may be said, speaking generally, that a breath of Ibsen has passed through all his works, during the past seven or eight years."

Jones, like Ibsen, had a message for his age. He was conscious that he had a mission to perform. As Ibsen he saw the evils of society, and recognized that the stage may be made a powerful agency for raising the morals of the nation, in other words, a pulpit from which to proclaim the truth as he understood it. Dickinson says of Jones "He was one of the first to realize that potency of the play in social reform...He saw the social obligation of the dramatist, the social possibilities of the play, and he saw too that these obligations and opportunities were violated by the conditions of the theatre of his time. He proceeded to make appeal on behalf of the

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1 Aspects of Modern Drama, F. W. Chandler, pp. 154-155

2 The English Stage, A. Filon, transl. by F. Whyte, p. 297







theatre to the only power that could bring forth a new theatre, the minds and the hearts of the people themselves.<sup>1</sup> This zeal to establish a new theatre, and raising the theatre to the level of good drama has contributed greatly in making Jones primarily a man of the theatre, a propagandist for the theatre. This accounts for the fact that he has never entirely emancipated himself from the theatrical even in his greatest plays, while this element is entirely absent in the best social dramas of Ibsen. Jones says that the chief end of a play is to give an impression of life.<sup>2</sup> Hamilton summarizes Jones' theory of the drama in these words: "...the purpose of the drama is (1) to represent life and (2) to interpret life, in terms of the theatre."<sup>3</sup> Therefore his plays are always dramatic, and since he is writing for the theatre they are theatrical. He believed in preaching the truth, but truth is sometimes ugly, and he knows the public too well to accept without modification Ibsen's uncompromising realism. He is primarily a reformer with an eye on telling a good story, while Ibsen is a painter primarily, and cares not much about the story nor teaching a lesson; he longs to depict human beings; Jones loves to tell a story and preach a sermon. "Jones is essentially a moralist"<sup>4</sup> says Chandler. The drama must be artistic, but art is not life and therefore as a practical dramatist Jones turns to "Beauty, Mystery, Passion and Imagination," instead of turning to realism as Ibsen has done.<sup>5</sup> "He is a born playwright", says Hamilton, "and as such always avoids carefully any assumption of superiority above the public."<sup>6</sup> Thus we see that Jones is a compromiser; he says

1 The Continental Drama of England, T. H. Dickinson, p. 91

2 The Law of the Drama, H. A. Jones, p. 13

3 Problems of the Play, C. Hamilton, p. 319

4 Aspects of Modern Drama, F. W. Chandler, p. 121

5 Dramatic portraits, P. P. Howe, p. 57

6 Problems of the Playwright, C. Hamilton, p. 156



that the drama must both represent and interpret life, and in the same breath he says that the stage is not real life, that art must be healthy, and that it is not the domain of the drama to study vice,<sup>1</sup> disease, the disagreeable, the ugly. Still, as we shall see in the discussion of his plays, Jones is most true to life when he is most realistic.

Both Ibsen and Jones were apostles of social reforms; both had a message for their countrymen. Jones, like Ibsen, was born in a small community, and became intimately acquainted with village life, its hypocrisies and its bigotry. Victor Hugo expressed it well when he said of Digne, that it was like most small towns: it has many tongues to talk, but few heads to think. Jones attacks these evils in "Saints and Sinners", "The Triumph of the Philistines", and "The Hypocrites" with the same vigor and the same earnestness that Ibsen did in his "Pillars of Society" and "An Enemy of the People." While Ibsen confined his criticism to the middle class, Jones directed his satire also to the aristocracy. "The Liars" for instance, is a picture of high London society. In Jones' problem plays we also perceive the "breath of Ibsen."

However, in these plays the difference between Ibsen and Jones' attitude toward life is clearly shown. As we have seen<sup>2</sup> Ibsen is a revolutionary; he is a great champion of individualism. Only through the free development of the individual can perfection be attained since modern society is largely founded upon shams, lies, and hypocrisies. But if Ibsen pleads the claims of the individual, Jones pleads that of society. He is a conservative. He believes that social conventions rule the world - the individual must be sacrificed to preserve society, the social order, convention.

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1 Playhouse Impressions, A. B. Walkly, pp. 113-114

2 Chapter II, page 10







Dickinson says, "In spite of his appearance of revolt, his plays defend the status quo."<sup>1</sup> Nora goes out of the open door to life in defiance of social conventions, Drusilla goes to death in order that social conventions might be vindicated. But this conservatism on the part of Jones is very natural. If Ibsen is intensely national, Jones is rigorously British.<sup>2</sup> Filon makes this remark concerning his nationalism: "...and he is the most English of all living dramatists, one who expresses most sincerely and most brilliantly the mind of his generation and of his race."<sup>3</sup>

Jones, like Ibsen is a careful and painstaking playwright; he works methodically, changes and polishes his plays continually. In his later dramas he has attained great perfection of technique. Shaw says of him, "Jones' plays grow: they are not cut out of bits of paper and stuck together....Mr. Jones' technical skill is taken as a matter of course."<sup>4</sup> And Mr. Max Beerbohm voices the same opinion "nor is any one of them so fine a craftsman. We are not made conscious of it while the play is in progress. From the very outset, we are aware merely of certain ladies and gentlemen behaving with apparent freedom and naturalness. It is only when the play is over that we notice the art of it."<sup>5</sup> Jones was intimately acquainted with the theatre by coming in contact with it early in life. He was brought up behind the footlights.<sup>6</sup> He knew the theatre, understood it and loved it.<sup>7</sup> As a technician, however, he owes much to Ibsen;

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1 The Contemporary Drama of England, T. H. Dickinson, p. 93

2 Brander Matthews, A Study of the Drama, p. 67

3 A. Filon, The English Stage, transl. by F. Whyte, p. 253

4 Bernard Shaw, Dramatic Opinions and Essays, v. 1, p. 108

5 H. A. Jones, Dolly Reforming Herself, p. 3

6 C. Hamilton, Problems of the Playwright, p. 154

7 B. H. Clark, The British and American Drama of Today, p. 117.

"A play by Pinero or Jones may almost invariably be counted upon to be masterly in form."



for it was not until he had come under the influence of Ibsen's realistic technique that Jones banished the soliloquy, and the asides.<sup>1</sup>

In "The Silver King" there are five long, nine short soliloquies and twelve soliloquy-asides; sixty-four pure asides, and four dialogue-asides; four fortuitous, and four intentional overhearing scenes, while in "The Physician" there are no soliloquies, only one dialogue-aside,<sup>2</sup> and one fortuitous overhearing scene. Moreover, there is the same compactness in his best plays as in those of Ibsen. They are stripped of nonessentials. A good example of this compactness is found in "Dolly Reforming Herself". Beerbohm says, "The verisimilitude in Dolly Reforming Herself is all the more admirable because the play is founded on a philosophic question, and in the whole course of it there is not a scene, not a character (not even the butler's character) that is not strictly and logically relevant to this question. The whole fabric is wrought in a tight and formal pattern, yet the effect of it is as life itself."<sup>3</sup>

In addition his dialogue also has the same naturalness, simplicity, and dignity as that of the Norwegian dramatist.<sup>4</sup> Archer says: "I should not be surprised if the historian of the future were to find in the plays of Mr. Henry Arthur Jones the first marked symptoms of a reaction - of a tendency to reject extrinsic and fanciful ornaments in dialogue, and to rely for its effect upon its vivid appropriateness to character and situation."<sup>5</sup>

In regard to the use of dialect in his dramas Jones confines it almost entirely to minor characters.<sup>6</sup> Jones spreads out his time. He does not observe the unities of time nor of place.

1 A. Henderson, The Changing Drama, p. 205

2 K. G. H. Teichman, Henry Arthur Jones Dramen, p. 51

3 Dolly Reforming Herself, p. 3

4 C. Hamilton, Problems of the Playwright, p. 153

5 W. Archer, Play-Making, --p. 383

6 K. G. H. Teichman, Henry Arthur Jones Dramen, p. 56







Jones' characters are also true to life. Although they are living, human beings as Ibsens, still they never quite reach the latter's powerful intellectuality. Again quoting Mr. Beerbohm, since he has so well expressed this fact, "Other playwrights may create more salient and memorable figures. But none of them creates figures<sup>1</sup> so life-like as Mr. Jones." He, too, reverts to the same types. Again and again we have in his drama the clergyman, or priestly hero, as for instance Jacob Fletcher, Michael, Judah, and Philos Ingarfield. The woman with a past is also a favorite type with both Ibsen and Jones. However, the husband in Ibsen's dramas is superior to the wife, while in Jones' plays the husband is generally inferior. Jones has caricatures in several plays while Ibsen only once resorted to caricaturing, and this is in the person of Stensgard.

Ibsen evolves his plot from his characters, and usually only the end of his stories is acted out upon the stage. Jones has the whole story performed upon the stage before his audience. He says, "When you have a character or several characters you haven't a play. You may keep these in your mind and nurse them till they combine in a piece of action; but you haven't got your play till you have your theme, characters, and actions all fused. The process with me is as purely automatic and spontaneous as dreaming, in fact it is really dreaming while you are awake."<sup>2</sup> Most of his dramas have vivid action. There is but one instance among all his dramas in which he makes use of retrospective action, and that is in "Mrs. Dane's Defense." This method, so characteristic of Ibsen's social dramas, of mirroring the past in the present action, does not appeal to Jones. He says, "One sentence may give us all that is practically worth knowing of a man's

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1 Dolly Reforming Herself, p. 3

2 Play-Making, W. Archer, p. 58



past history." <sup>1</sup> It makes too great demands upon the audience. "To insure success in play-writing", he says, "only two rules need to be observed: "Don't fog your audience" and "Don't bore them." And he continues: "...the science of successful play-writing may be broadly defined as the science of not boring playgoers." <sup>2</sup> His eagerness to hold the interest of the playgoers accounts largely for his emphasis upon plot. Archer remarks, "Whatever else Jones may or may not be, he is a first-rate story teller. Even when his story seems unacceptable and unpleasing, he does not bore us; and when he gets a good story to tell, he holds us like a vice." <sup>3</sup>

Nevertheless, it would be an injustice to Jones to give the impression that he wrote merely to please the theatre goers. He was among the first of the modern English playwrights who realised the importance of putting the drama in the hands of the reading public. He labored hard and untiringly to make it a work of literature as well as a work for the theatre. <sup>4</sup> In his efforts to accomplish this he solicits the aid of men of letters, and appealed to them to turn their attention to the modern drama. <sup>5</sup> Mr. Phelps says, "Like Dryden and Ben Jonson, Mr. Jones appeals from the decision of the audience to the literary critics and the reading public." <sup>6</sup> In a lecture delivered to Yale University in 1906, entitled "Literature and the Modern Drama" he tried to enlist our aid in this work. <sup>7</sup> Probably, this accounts for the fact that his dramas, like Ibsen's, are not only actable but also readable plays. "As the author of some

1 H. A. Jones, The Law of the Drama, p. 19

2 H. A. Jones, Renascence of the English Drama, p. 93

3 K. G. H. Teichmann, Henry Arthur Jones Dramen, p.

4 W. L. Phelps, The Twentieth Century Theatre, p. 10

5 H. A. Jones, The Divine Gift, Dedication, p. 9

6 W. L. Phelps, The Twentieth Century Theatre, p. 10

7 H. A. Jones, The Foundation of a National Drama, pp. 44-68







of the most popular and successful plays of recent years, Mr. Jones has distinctly and intentionally raised the taste of the ordinary theatre-goer.<sup>1</sup>"

Jones denies that the conflict of wills constitutes the fundamental principle of the drama. It is not the dominant struggle of the human will that moves the action of the drama, but a character in a play is "up against" some opposing circumstance, social law, person, or persons, and destiny of groups of persons. That is, when a hero or heroine is "up against a tough proposition" we have a drama.<sup>2</sup> In the comedy this struggle is less serious, though involving the human will; it is against the prejudice, whims, foibles, follies, and the small vices of mankind. Both in his serious plays and his comedies this theory of Jones' is illustrated.

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1 H. A. Jones, The Foundation of a National Drama, pp. 44-68

2 H. A. Jones, The Law of the Drama, pp. 14-20



## CHAPTER V

## THE DISCUSSION OF THE MOST IMPORTANT OF JONES' PLAYS

The appearance of "Saints and Sinners" at the Vaudeville Theatre, September 25, 1884, is an historic event in the life of the theatre. It forced the theatre into the arena of public discussion. Jones became a self-appointed social critic in throwing this "bomb-shell" into the camp of English respectability.<sup>2</sup> "Such ruthless handling of hypocrisy and selfishness under the cloak of religion has led to a good deal of more or less angry controversy", says Brander Matthews.<sup>3</sup> It is evident that Jones in his attack on the respectable institutions of society was influenced by Ibsen's "The Pillars of Society".<sup>4</sup>

Jones seems to have been unconscious of this fact, however, for, like Ibsen, he was surprised that his good intentions had been misunderstood, and wrote an article in defense of his position in "The Nineteenth Century Review" for January, 1885, entitled "Religion and the Stage."<sup>5</sup> There were, of course, a few clergymen who welcomed the play, and voiced their approval, both in public and in private letters to the author. By many, however, he was bitterly attacked, and denounced as a blasphemer for depicting religious life upon the stage. Nevertheless, the play continued its performance until Easter.

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1 T. H. Dickinson, The Contemporary Drama of England, p. 97

2 Ibid., p. 141

3 Recent English Dramatists, Course XVI, p. 101

4 T. H. Dickinson, The Contemporary Drama of England, p. 98. See Also K. G. H. Teichmann, Henry Arthur Jones' Dramen, p. 28

5 H. A. Jones, Saints and Sinners, Preface, p. XXI





Jones showed the same dauntless spirit as Ibsen did; he continued to attack fearlessly the hypocrisies of religion in a number of dramas and comedies.<sup>1</sup> Among the prominent men of letters in England who praised "Saints and Sinners" is Matthew Arnold.<sup>2</sup> It is the first play that Jones wrote alone, and his reputation as a playwright was more firmly established.<sup>3</sup> He has devoted the remainder of his long and fruitful career in writing dramas with a purpose.<sup>4</sup> Unlike Ibsen, however, he strives or attempts to answer the problems which he raises. To teach a moral becomes his creed, "But in neither case will Jones forget to drive in and clinch a moral."<sup>5</sup> Jones has expressed himself very clearly in regard to this fact, "So cunningly economic is nature that she can slip in her moral by hook or by crook. There cannot be an intellectual effort in any province of art without a moral implication."<sup>6</sup> In "Saints and Sinners" we have the old, old story of "The wages of sin is death", truth must triumph at any cost. Jacob Fletcher, the clergyman, shakes off the lie and confesses the truth. Hypocrisy and middle class commercialism, stalking in the guise religion are unmasked. Fletcher is finally restored to his former position of respect and influence in the community, while the self-seeking, materialistic, speculator, Deacon Haggard, is brought to shame, and the repentant sinner must pay the penalty for her transgression of the social and moral law with death.

The story is, as usual in Jones' dramas, very interesting.

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1 F. W. Chandler, Aspects of Modern Drama, p. 155, See also A. Filon, The English Stage, Transl. by F. Whyte, p. 236

2 Ibid.

3 B. H. Clark, European Theories of the Drama, p. 458

4 See Chapter II, p.

5 F. W. Chandler, Aspects of Modern Drama, p. 123

6 E. R. Hunt, The Play of Today





Jacob Fletcher, a non-conformist minister of a small parish, at first conceals the fault of his erring daughter, Letty, who lacked the strength of character to resist the wiles of the unscrupulous Captain Fanshawe. The minister, together with young George Kingsmill, her faithful farmer-lover whom she had spurned, had brought the girl back from London, and she resumed her place in the parish. The spectacular Hoggard, a prominent deacon in Fletcher's church, and one of the merchant princes in that community, knows the truth about Letty's absence, and counts on making use of this secret to attain his fraudulent aims. Fletcher is the trustee for his dead partner's widow. Hoggard makes him choose between his daughter's disgrace and his own integrity. There is a conflict in his soul. He decides to remain true to the widow's cause, and says to his tempter: "Do your worst, we are ready; we ask for no mercy, we stand upon the truth". With his daughter by his side, he stands before his whole congregation in church and makes a public confession of her guilt, at the same time offering his resignation. They remained, however, at Steepleford, and Letty for four years was an angel of mercy among the poor and the outcasts. George, who had made a fortune in the colonies, returns just in time to receive her dying into his arms, and thus she passes away with the words: "I am so tired daddy - so tired - "<sup>1</sup> and the curtain falls. In spite of this melodramatic end there is something touching in this closing scene. The language is simple; there is no striving after rhetorical effects. This is true for the most part in the whole play. There are other evidences of the melodramatic in this play.

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1. Saints and Sinners, Act V, p. 115



When Fletcher reads Letty's letter in which she acquaints him with the truth about her, he sobs. <sup>1</sup> Ibsen knew better than to have a father burst into tears at such a tragic moment. When George learns of Fanshawe's crime he exclaims: "I will kill him! As there is a <sup>2</sup> heaven above us, I will kill him!" This close of Act III is effective melodrama.

However, the characters are true to life with the exception of Hoggard, who is the traditional type of the villain, without a redeeming trait of character, and who, according to the due process of the melodrama, has the tables turned on him. A fugitive, he escapes from the pursuit of an angry mob and find safety in the home of the very man he had so greatly wronged - Fletcher. The other villain of the plan, Fanshawe, is more true to life. He has a conscience, at least, and loves the girl he has wronged. But he, also had to go the way of the transgressors. He is killed in India. Jones, like Ibsen, accounts for Letty's wrongdoing by heredity. Her mother's sister, after whom she had been named, also had a past, and, like Ibsen in "Rosmersholm", the portrait of this lady is used with effect to show how the dead control the destiny of the living. The central figure of the drama, Fletcher, also recalls Ibsen's preference for the priestly hero. He is an idealist, who can manage the financial and the moral affairs of others, but is as helpless as a child in managing his own affairs. His public confession strongly reminds us of the similar scene in which Consul Bernick confesses his guilt to his townspeople in "The Pillars of Society".

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1. Saints and Sinners, Act III, p. 48

2. Ibid., p. 50





Hoggard resembles in some respects the speculator Monsen in "The League of Youth", while there is clearly a similarity between the character of Greenacre and that of Engstrand, the carpenter, in "Ghosts". An additional element of the melodrama is found in the comic relief, supplied by the two low-comedy old men, Greenacre and Raddles, and the elderly lovers, Lydia, the housekeeper, and Lot

In point of technique also "Saints and Sinners" shows great improvement over "The Silver King". Although Jones still makes use of the traditional five acts he has considerably reduced the change of scenes within the acts. There are also fewer characters in this play; fewer soliloquies and asides and only one overhearing scene. The servants and minor characters are used to carry on the exposition.

In "The Hypocrites", written twenty-two years later (1906), Jones reverts to the same theme of his first problem play, and again, a year later in 1907, in "The Evangelist." Jones recognized the power of religion as a means of propaganda in the interest of moral reforms. Chandler calls our attention to this tendency in Jones. "Certainly, in the best plays of Jones, religious experience is presented, not for itself, but as a motive to action, and as prompting always to a moral conflict. In "The Galileans' Victory" (The Evangelist) in "The Hypocrites", and in "Saints and Sinners", the principal object of this conflict is a world of Philistines opposed to a priestly hero."

Edgar Linnell, the central figure in "The Hypocrites", an earnest, hard-working curate, who fearlessly follows his work of reform among the laboring class in the small rural community of





Weyburg is opposed by the guardians of the church, who under the cover of religion pursue their own selfish ends. The prominent deacon, the manor-lord of Weyburg, Mr. Wilmore, objects to the transformation of "The Blue Lion", a disreputable drinking place, into a model public house where the workingmen's<sup>1</sup> social recreation club is to hold its meeting. He opposes this reform because it incurs the ill-will of the wealthy brewer, Pelly, to whom he is under financial obligations. In fact, Linnell's reforms arouse general displeasure among these "Philistines" because it disturbs their lazy, complacent life, and because it is contrary to the spirit of middle-class conservatism. Mrs. Wilmore says:

Mrs. Wilmore: "We quite appreciate Mr. Linnell's zeal and courage in reforming them, but he makes us all thoroughly uncomfortable."

Mrs. Linnell: "How?"

Mrs. Wilmore: "We never know whose turn to be reformed may come next. And we all know we need it!"<sup>2</sup>

And when Helen Plugenet, the wealthy heiress, whom the Wilmores have chosen to marry their son, whose past life had been rather questionable, in order to secure a "rosy" future for him, says of the curate:

Helen: "At least Mr. Linnell is sincere". The mercenary county lawyer answers:

Viwash: "Yes confound him! That's what makes him such a terrible nuisance."<sup>3</sup>

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1. F.W. Chandler, Aspects of Modern Drama, p. 161
  2. The Hypocrites, Act. I, p. 12
  3. Ibid., p. 17



He even attempts to convert Linnell to his sordid conservatism by trying to impress him with the futility of his "house in order plans". He says:

Viwash: "Look at society! What is it? An organized hypocrisy everywhere! We all live by taking in each other's dirty linen, and pretending to wash it; by cashing each other's dirty little lies and shams, and passing them on! Civilization means rottenness when you get to the core of it! It's rottenness everywhere, and I fancy it's rather more rotten in this rotten little hole than anywhere else. (Linnell makes a protest). Oh, yes it is! I've been forty years in a lawyer's office here. I know the history of every family in the place! If I were to take the roof off of every house, and show you what's underneath - ! What's the use? It's a lovely, picturesque little township, nestling at the foot of the undulating downs? Let it nestle! Take the guide-book view of the place. Let sleeping dogs lie....."<sup>1</sup>

The curate, however, in the fashion of Ibsen's reformers, struggles single-handed, alone, against the "compact majority". He denounces a marriage between the honest William Sheldrake, a laborer, and a disreputable woman of the village, because it would be a marriage founded upon a lie. But Wilmore, in the name of outraged morality, insists that the marriage shall take place, and that the guilty couple be made an example of by publicly denouncing their sin in the

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1. The Hypocrites, Act I, p. 34





pulpit for the edification of the good people of Weyburg. He says to Linnell:

Wilmore: "And I beg you will let it be understood that I have only one rule in these cases, that I will tolerate no tampering with the plain dictates of morality on my estate! ....."<sup>1</sup>  
<sup>2</sup>

He prides himself upon his good, plain, old-fashioned ideas of morality that all "right-minded persons hold". However, when he learns that his own son has been guilty of the same offence, his moral sense becomes dull, and he does not hesitate to resort to intrigue and lies in order to prevent him from repairing his wrong by marrying the girl. Even the county doctor enters into the conspiracy to defraud the poor girl of her rights, and persuades her to lie in order to clear her lover of this guilt that would make his marriage with the heiress impossible. But Linnell will not consent to this double wrong, and insists that Lennard marry Rachel. When he sees himself out-witted by these "pillars of morality", he denounces them as liars and hypocrites. He is about to retire, perplexed, defeated in his struggle for truth, when the young man relents and chooses the girl he had always loved instead of the heiress. Linnell says to him: "You've owned your fault! You're a free man from this hour!"<sup>3</sup> But he is not satisfied until he has put the whole "house in order", and the remaining act is taken up with the idealist's successful effort in bringing about a reconciliation between the

1. The Hypocrites, Act I, p. 53

2. Ibid., Act II, p. 81

3. Ibid., Act III, p. 144





parents and the son, who, in their eyes, had ruined them, and the curtain goes down with Linnell's words: "Now my work in Weyburg is finished!"<sup>1</sup> The preaching is especially prominent in this act. In fact, the whole play is a sermon, poorly disguised in the garbof an old story. But Jones has "clinched" the moral. Chandler says, "... in "The Hypocrites", the author's whole effort is directed toward converting the seducer and his family from neglect of the girl to acceptance of her."<sup>2</sup>

The influence of Ibsen is easily recognized in this play - the struggles of a hero engaged in a conflict with hypocrisy to uphold truth. "The Hypocrites" is much more realistic than "Saints and Sinners". The characters, although familiar ones, are drawn from life. The hypocritical deacon Wilmore, unlike Hoggard, the familiar villain of the melodrama, is endowed with human qualities; he is a distinct personality. Its compactness also reminds us of Ibsen; the nonessentials are eliminated. The plot is well worked out, and the action leads up to the climax at the close of Act III without depending upon the artificial devices so conspicuous in the melodrama. There are no long soliloquies, only three short soliloquy-  
asides, and one intentional overhearing scene. The exposition is natural; the dialogues simple and direct. Jones gave the play a happy ending to show, probably, the value of expediency in human conduct. It is one of the most didactic of Jones' dramas, in which he has used his favorite device of "turning the tables" to good advantage.

In four additional dramas Jones hammers away at the besetting sins of the middle classes, hypocrisy and bigotry. These are "The Middleman", "The Crusaders", "The Triumph of the Philistines", and

1 The Hypocrites, Act III, p. 161

2 F. W. Chandler, Aspects of Modern Drama, p. 324



"The Liars!" In "The Middleman" Jones treats the world of industry. It is a portraiture of the capitalist at his worst. "The middleman himself is an embodiment of all the vices of the capitalist: insolent, purse-proud, a grinder of the faces of the poor. He even steals his daughter's letters."<sup>1</sup> The story or plot, is interesting, but presented by the method of melodrama; it deals with the exploitation of a poor inventor by a captain of industry, and its retribution. Again we have the case of "the tables turned". Jones has well stated its message in his dedication of the play to E. S. Willard. "And if the matter and substance of the play are still interesting to play-goers, it is because the story repeats some rude enforcement of that old perennial, message to the oppressor. 'Behold the hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.'<sup>2</sup>"

Joseph Chandler, the proprietor of the Latlaw Porcelain works, had become a rich man by defrauding one of his employees, the inventor, Cyrus Blenkarn. His ambition is the ambition of his class, a seat in Parliament. To attain this end he needs the support of Sir Seaton Unfraville, who belongs to the old aristocracy. He brings about the engagement of his son Julian and Felicia, the aristocrat's daughter. But Julian loves Mary, the daughter of the old inventor, and insists on making her his wife when he learns that it is his duty to protect her from dishonor. But Chandler will not hear of it; he is willing to sacrifice his own son's happiness for a few hundred votes. He refuses to pay Julian's debts, and threatens to disown him. So the son consents to a hasty departure for Africa. It will be an easy matter to break his engagement, after his father has

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1 A. B. Walkley, Playhouse Impressions, p. 126

2 The Middleman, p. 9





been elected to Parliament, and marry the girl to whom he owes his name. In the second act, six months later, we see Cyrus busy at work trying to find out the secret of the old Latlaw ware. If he succeeds it will put Chandler out of business. He is suddenly aroused from his work by the news of his daughter's misfortune, and in a very melodramatic soliloquy he cries out to Heaven for justice and revenge. In the next act the melodrama reaches its climax, when, to save his invention, he breaks up the furniture to obtain fuel for his kiln. But the invention is saved. In act IV his prayer is answered. His revenge is complete: the man who had swindled him out of his fortune now begs for a job, and the man whom Chandler and his son had so greatly wronged gives him employment to save him from starvation. The tables have turned. The moral must be clinched. That is what we expect in Jones' plays. In the same act, the unexpected also happens. Julian returns from Africa a great hero, although nothing in his character suggested such a change, not more so than did the character of Nora up to the last scene in "A Doll's House" suggest a change from the light-hearted, irresponsible woman to the serious, reasoning, independent woman, who deserted home and family to live her own life in her own way. The dramatist, moreover, makes still greater demands upon our credulity. The potter's daughter, resurrected from the grave, stands suddenly before the astonished audience, the smiling bride of the warrior hero. The atonement is complete, retributive justice is satisfied. This ending is characteristic of the melodrama. The idea of the "tables turned" is also illustrated in the lives of the persons representing the comic element of the play. Nancy Blenkarn, Mary's younger sister, during the first three acts, makes a slave of her lover, Jesse Pegg. In the fourth act, after their marriage, he is the tyrant in the home.





The characters in the play are nearly all exaggerated, familiar types of the melodrama. Chandler is another Hoggard, placed in different surroundings. Like Bernick he lies and intrigues to further his own ends; he has climbed to wealth and position by defrauding the poor idealist, Cyrus Blenkard. The heroines in all three of these plays are of the same type, indiscreet young girls, who have come to grief because they have violated the laws of convention. The story predominates over the characters, and we remember the plot when the characters are forgotten.

In the six years that intervene between "Saints and Sinners" and this play, Jones had made considerable progress in technique. He has discarded the traditional fifth act. Although the number of characters is still larger than in "Saints and Sinners" he has dispensed with the Scribe method of depending upon servants for exposition. The soliloquies and asides occur less frequently. Still, he makes use of externals to govern the action of the play, as for instance, an intercepted letter, in the case of Julian, which necessitated a confession to her father on the part of Mary. This was necessary to secure the dramatic climax of Act II.

In "The Triumph of the Philistines", a shoe manufacturer is the central figure. The sub-title which appeared on the play-bill announcing its first performance, May 11, 1895, "how Mr. Jorgan preserved the morals of Market Penberry under very trying circumstances" is suggestive of the nature of the play. In this play Jones criticises particularly the attitude of the English people toward art. It is another sermon against cant and hypocrisy. Jones, in his Preface to the play, says that the lesson or moral it teaches is: "Be not righteous overmuch: Why shouldest thou destroy thyself?"<sup>1</sup> He admits

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<sup>1</sup> The Triumph of the Philistines, Preface, p. XI



having sacrificed art for an ethical purpose; and this is evident throughout the play. Every incident and every conversation emphasizes the theme.

The deceased father and husband of the young and beautiful Alma Suleny were idealists. They had devoted their lives to the promotion of art in the world. They had established a school at Market Penbury where the gifted would have an opportunity of developing their talent. One of these who had profited by this advantage, William Hesselwood, had created a beautiful painting, "La Bacchante", the model of which was the gay, capricious Sally Lebrune, a French woman. Market Penbury, however, is a respectable English town and could never tolerate the presence of a "Bacchante" or a French model in its midst, and a struggle between the art lovers, championed by Alma, and the narrow, self-righteous morality mongers, headed by Jorgan and his partner, Mt. Pote, begins. The exposition from the very beginning of the first act is clear and direct. It is done by means of dialogues between <sup>Lady</sup> Beauboy, Alma, and the former's nephew, Sir Valentine Fellows, heir to the Penbury estate, a young man who had been educated on the Continent, and who had just arrived at Market Penbury. When he learns of Jorgan's intolerance he decides to oppose him. He buys the painting in the hope of defeating him in this way. Lady Beauboy, who is a shrewd, worldly-wise woman, warns him in saying:

Lady B.: "He'll beat you, Val. You're fighting the strongest force in English life - that black, bitter, stubborn Puritanism that you'll never change, my dear boy, till you've the climate of the country, and the bone and marrow of our English race, Jorgan, will beat you, Val."





Her prophecy is fulfilled. Jorgan, by means of lies and intrigues, not only covers up his own escapades with the French model, but drives out of Market Pewbury Sir Valentine and Alms, who has become his wife. All is done "in the interest of morality". The art school is turned into a Boot and Shoe Orphan Asylum. Sir Valentine, the individualist, whose motto is "Let every man do what he pleases",<sup>1</sup> is defeated by the hypocritical and bigoted conventionalist, Jorgan, whose elastic conscience permits him to cover up his own moral transgressions at the expense of an innocent man's reputation. All this is done, to be sure, "in the interest of morality", a thing which recalls to our minds Consul Bernick and his treatment of Johan: for there is realism in the portrayal of the Norwegian manufacturer, while Jorgan is merely a caricature. The worldly-wise Lady Beauboys consoles the victim with the words:

Lady B. "You've brought it all on yourself, Val. You may as well try to batter down a mountain with your fist as try to demolish that dull, hard mixture of stubborn virtue and stupid hypocrisy which go to make up English middle-class respectability. Give it up, Val!"....<sup>2</sup>  
It's no use damning Market Pewbury. It's a good, average bundle of humanity, I assure you. Remember, Val, the world only goes on and hangs together because of the virtue and respectability in it. Hypocrisy and humbug don't hold a community together, neither does immorality, however charming and delightful it may be. And though there's a good deal of cant and humbug in Market Pewbury, there's a good deal of sturdy virtue<sup>3</sup> and honesty too."

1. The Triumph of the Philistines, Act I, p. 6

2. Ibid., p. 86

3. Ibid., p. 88





These two speeches voice Jones' conservatism and his spirit of compromise. The hero, though defeated in his struggle against a false social order, leaves Market Pewbury a wiser man.

The characters of this drama, with the exception of Sally Lebrune, act and speak as they do merely to further the moral purpose of the dramatist. The plot depends on intrigue for its action or movement. There are still traces of the melodrama to be found, but in compactness it compares favorably with the realistic social plays of Ibsen. The whole action is crowded into three acts. The time covers, not several years as in his earlier plays, but only four months. The soliloquy and aside are entirely discarded. If the story holds the audience it is because of the vivacious little model with her wit and her exuberance of life. Her gay, care-free spirit and her unmoral sense contrast strangely with the veneered respectability of Market Pewbury, and prevent the play from boring the playgoers. It is she who "turns the tables" on Jorgan.

"The Liars" has been termed by one critic Jones' masterpiece,<sup>1</sup> by another,<sup>2</sup> one of the finest examples of the comedy of manners in England. Jones' conservatism is again manifested in the play. The social order must not be disturbed; divorce is not a means for escaping from marital unhappiness, all differences between married people must be patched up at any price for the security and permanence of society. A selfish, pleasure-loving woman entangles a whole group of men and women with her lies. The first three acts describe the havoc her lies have wrought. Finally, when she

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1 P.P. Howe, Dramatic Portraits, p. 79

2 B.H. Clark, The British and American Drama of To-Day, p. 44



enjoins her lover to tell the truth, the atmosphere clears. Social ruin is averted by conforming to the rules and regulations of society. The husband, Gilbert Nepean, has learned the lesson, that, if a man has a charming wife and he does not take her out to dinner, another man will, so he takes her out to dinner, and his wife, in a cold-blooded way shows her lover the door. Lady Jessica's lie did one thing at least, it taught two fools a lesson. This she could not have done without Sir Christopher, the elderly raisonneur, the worldly-wise man of experience, who pilots the ship of society and sees to it that the whole crew arrives safely into harbor. The same insistence on the truth that characterizes Ibsen's problem plays is present in this comedy, and in spite of its humor there is a serious moral purpose back of it. Jones, however, is now a master technician. Nowhere is this moral idea forced upon the audience, it evolves naturally out of the situations that, skilfully woven together, make a most interesting story. Jones' mastery of the dialogue is also clearly shown in "The Liars". In point of time consumed for the action, it is the most economical of Jones' plays. It covers nine days at most.

"The Case of Rebellious Susan" also deals with the marriage question. Although written three years before "The Liars" it is by far a more serious play. In the latter, social disaster was averted by telling a lie, But Jones, unlike Ibsen, is a conservative. Since conventions and social usages govern the world, they must be upheld. Divorce is unconventional, its practice endangers society; therefore it must be avoided. If the truth cannot do it, a lie will do. This tendency to compromise is characteristic of Jones. Ibsen knows no compromise. The double standard of morality is wrong, but it has always existed, therefore a wife whose husband has been





unfaithful cannot retaliate. If she does, she loses her social standing. If she must have revenge, she can retaliate secretly and lie about it. But there is no satisfaction in that, consequently the case is hopeless. Women must make the best of a bad situation. That is their duty.

The play opens like a cyclone. Lady Susan storms about her husband's infidelity, refuses to be consoled, and vows she will pay him back in his own coin. Sir Richard, an experienced man of the world, warns her against the consequences of such a step.<sup>1</sup> During a sojourn in Egypt, she has a love affair with a young man, who follows her back to England. But the watchful uncle prevents an elopement, and the youth is hurried off to New Zealand. On this journey he meets a young lady and in less than three weeks has forgotten Lady Susan. When she learns this, her pride is wounded and the road to conciliation is paved. When she suggests that the reconciliation be conditioned on "let bygones be bygones" on both sides, he becomes indignant, and demands that she tell him the whole truth. She cleverly evades a confession by resorting to a lie. He can justify his "bygones" on the grounds that married life at times grows unromantic. But she cannot do this; she is a woman. Sir Richard dispels the lingering suspicion of a "bygone" on her part in his mind, and their matrimonial difficulties are patched up. Still we feel that the drama is not over. We imagine that we hear the faint echo of Mrs. Alving's voice whispering "Ghosts" as the curtain falls. As most of Jones' comedies, it is serious. Someone said of it that it is a tragedy dressed up as a comedy. The attempt

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1. The Case of Rebellious Susan, p. 108





of Lady Susan to assert her individualism has dismally failed, and Elaine has not fared any better in her efforts for the emancipation of women. Jones denies the equality of men and women before the social, moral, and civil laws. Ibsen fought to emancipate woman for the good of the race, Jones denies her equal rights with man for the good of established order, for the good of society. Sir Richard says to Elaine: "There is an immense future for women as wives and mothers, and a very limited future for them in any other capacity...Nature's darling woman is a stay-at-home woman, a woman who wants to be a good wife and a good mother, and cares very little for anything else."<sup>1</sup> His philosophical observations and moralizing remind us a little of Pastor Manders. He performs the same function as Sir Christopher does in "The Liars". This raisonneur has become one of Jones' stock characters. He is usually given the task of expressing Jones' idea of expediency in human conduct.

The characters are realistic with the exception of those who constitute the element of comic relief. These are mere caricatures. The plot is interesting, although somewhat encumbered by the subsidiary action. The soliloquy and aside are absent. The dialogue is realistic, and the exposition clear and natural. As in Ibsen's "A Doll's House" and "Ghosts" the action is crowded into three acts, while "The Liars" has four.

"The Crusaders" is a satire on the reform movement in England.<sup>2</sup> Archer calls it a satirical romance. In this play Jones makes an excursion in the realm of fancy. He describes, by means of a clever fable, a social group, busily engaged in the attempt to

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1 The Case of Rebellious Susan, p. 101

2 The Crusaders, Preface, p. VI



reform London. Its theme is social idealism. Like Ibsen's "An Enemy of the People", it depicts the conflicts of an idealist in his struggles to bring about reforms. Both failed as reformers. Dr. Stockmann failed in his reform movement because his reforms would entail financial loss to carry it through. His idealism was defeated by the spirit of materialism in the townspeople, while Philos Ingarfield's reform movement failed because of the insincerity of the members of the organization. There is a selfish motive in each, and the London Reformation League is employed to attain personal ends. Even the leader, Philos, jeopardizes the work of reform by telling a lie to save the honor of the frivolous, self-indulgent young widow whom he loves. But the character of Philos is but a shadow in comparison with Dr. Stockmann. Both dramatists seem to satirize their own efforts at reform in these two plays. There is but one method of reforming London and that is by reforming the individual; organized reform must fail. That is the lesson we get from this play.

There is no central figure in this play. The idea is the absorbing interest. Philos through his enthusiasm and zeal has been successful in organizing "The London Reformation League". Mr. Greenslate left a million and a half to finance the scheme. The reformer has gathered around its banner a motley crowd: the young widow, Cynthia Greenslate, who is personally attracted to him; Mrs. Champion-Blake, who sees in it a social ladder; Lord Burnham the Foreign Secretary, <sup>who</sup> likes to be accommodating, and who, as long as it does not interfere with his horse-racing and his wine cellar, is perfectly willing that London be reformed; his son Dick, who is grasping this opportunity to flirt with the pretty widow; Mr. Palsam, who sees in it a means of spying out scandal





and exposing it; Una, who finds in it an outlet for her love of reclaiming the outcasts of society; Jawle, the social philosopher, who advocates the extinction of the race as a sure cure for the ills of society; Figg, who explains Jawle's doctrine and who looks after his financial business -these are the people who are to work harmoniously together to make London clean, safer, and honest. The opening scene shows the discensions in the group. Cynthia says, "I<sup>1</sup> wish we could reform London without quarrelling every time we meet." And Mrs. Champion-Blake, coming from the workingmen's meeting, exclaims, "As usual! Our workingmen members are quarrelling among<sup>2</sup> themselves." At the model Rose-Farm, where five hundred London working girls have been installed, the same conditions prevail. The good curate, the Reverend Algernon Portal, complains about the "indecorous behavior" of the girls and demands, in the name of the better class of residents in Wimbledon, the removal of these objectionable persons, since, according to his argument, "the mission of the church in a respectable neighborhood is to attend to the needs<sup>3</sup> of the respectable residents." That is not all; the never-do-wells whom the organization sent to Costa Rica got beyond the control of Philos and caused trouble there. Philos escapes to England to secure aid for them. But the government of Costa Rica demands several million dollars damages, or the delivery of Philos for trial. But this Lord Burnham cannot do, since all over England demonstrations, which threaten a revolution against the government, if the reformer be delivered, are taking place. As Foreign Secretary he

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1. The Crusaders, p. 10

2. Ibid., p. 17

3. Ibid., p. 52





is embarrassed and does not know what to do: if he levies a tax to pay the sum demanded by Costa Rica, there will be trouble, and if he gives up the idealist he faces a revolution. But Philos, in the meantime, has been innocently accused of compromising the honor of Cynthia, and lies to save her reputation. But Dick confesses his guilt and Philos is cleared. He was willing, nevertheless, to sacrifice his great cause for Cynthia, and that proved his unfitness as a leader. The visionary idealist, Una, preaches Jones' sermon in less than two lines: "If everybody mended himself, Lord Burnham, society wouldn't want any mending."<sup>1</sup>

Jones has crowded these intricate situations into three rather short acts. Of all the characters Mrs. Champion-Blake and Palsam are life-like, realistic persons. The latter is no compro-<sup>2</sup>miser; he insists on "the whole truth, and nothing but the truth". The comic personages, Jawle and Figg, are caricatures. As in "Dolly Reforming Herself", every incident and every conversation serve to bring out the idea, the theme.

However, in "Dolly Reforming Herself" the theme or idea is concerned with the individual, not with society. Dolly has a bad habit, the habit of extravagance. Harry, her husband, also has a bad habit, a temper. Now she is thirty and he thirty-five years old. Throughout all the four acts, this one idea is held before our mind: Can they cure their bad habits. Jones' answer is "No". It is a hopeless task. Both plays show the same mastery of technique, the same mastery of plot construction and dialogue. In

1 The Crusaders, p. 113

2 Ibid., p. 61



"The Crusaders" Jones describes a milieu. In "Dolly Reforming Herself" the idea is unfolded by the action of the characters.

The hero of "Judah" is an apostle of truth in conflict with insincerity and falsehood. Judah, like Fletcher, is a clergyman. However, the compelling force that prompts him to public confession is not a pressure from without, but a pressure from within. The conflict that ended with the triumph of truth over falsehood take place in the soul of the minister. He could have remained silent, and no one would have suspected his sin, and he could have continued to enjoy the love and respect of his fellowmen unchallenged. But no happiness whose foundation is a lie can endure. His love for the truth contends in his soul with his love for Vashti, and after much suffering his tortured soul finds peace and happiness in confessing the truth, for it's the truth that makes us free.

Judah, a young man of twenty-five, is the minister of the Durfield Rood Chapel in Beachampton. He, like Philos, has a mission to perform. But while Philos wishes to ennoble the human race through social amelioration, Judah hopes to do it through spiritual regeneration. He is not only an idealist but also a mystic, who hears voices, and whose thoughts dwell for the most part in the mysterious, unseen world. In the same community there is a young faith-healer, Vashti Dethic, whose miracles of healing together with beauty of person have won his heart. To him she is a goddess, clothed with divine power, a saint, who spends herself in good works for the happiness of others. In reality, she is an impostor, an adventuress. Like Regina and Rebecca, she has been brought up by an unscrupulous, criminal father. He taught her to practise deception to make a living. He started her out to





heal people and to make them believe that her supernatural power comes to her by fasting. The manor-lord of Beachampton invites her to his castle to heal his daughter, Lady Eve Asgarby. The sceptical scientist, Professor Jobb, challenges her power to cure through fasting, and demands that she be closely watched during the period of fasting. Her father secures a key to the tower-room, to which she has been confined, and stealthily takes food to her. Judah, hidden in the warden's niche, sees her devour the food. At first the revelation stuns him, and he spurns her. She pleads that her father urged her to this deception to escape poverty and want. But he came into her life and <sup>his</sup> love for her made her feel the full weight of her guilt, and she tried to free herself from her wickedness. As Rosmer ennobled Rebecca, Judah has ennobled Vashti with his love. Now he sees that she is of this earth as he is, and he offers to make her his wife. But Vashti, like Rebecca, refuses. She does not want to drag him down with her. In the meantime, the sceptical Jobb and his daughter Sophie, have been keeping watch also. He is determined to expose her as a swindler. But Judah warns old Dethic and he withdraws in time. Jobb, however, has already given the alarm, and refuses to allay his suspicion; he demands that Judah under oath tell him the truth. The second act closes with Judah's perjury. He had committed perjury to save the woman he loves; Nora, too, had perjured her soul to save the life of the man she loves. It seems that there is a breath of Ibsen in this last scene too. But in the last act - Act III - Ibsen's influence is especially strong. The action goes on almost entirely in the mind of the hero. He bares his soul to Vashti, who is about to become his wife. His soul is tortured night and day with remorse. He has to preach the truth and live a lie; he had





perjured his immortal soul. Jobb helps him to come to a decision. The scientist had proven Vashti's guilt, but for the sake of Lady Eve, he will not prosecute her and send her to prison. Lady Eve's faith in Vashti has partly restored her, and in gratitude for this, Lord Asgarby gives Judah, as a marriage present, the ground upon which his church is erected and twenty thousand pounds to build a new church, together with an annuity for life. But Judah before the assembled company, confesses his perjury. Vashti also makes a public confession of her deception, after which Judah says, "Our path is straight now; we can walk safely all our lives...Yes we will build our new church with our lives, and its foundation shall be the truth."<sup>1</sup>

The story of this play, as most of Ibsen's, evolves from the characters; the emphasis is on character, not on plot. There is hardly a trace of the melodrama. The characters, with the exception, possibly, of the blasé, fin de siècle couple, Sophie and Juxon Prall, caricatures, as we like to think of them, inserted for comic relief, are true to life. Also in construction it shows that Jones has followed Ibsen's realism. The exposition is natural and the dialogue realistic. There is something beautiful and fascinating about this play. Probably it is the spiritual and the mystical contrasted so admirably with the material that throws a poetical glow over the whole drama. How cold and unattractive is materialism when it is brought face to face with that lofty idealism, born of faith and enthusiasm, that ever inspires man to his nobles efforts! The spirit of Ibsen must have hovered somewhere near Jones when he created this work.

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1 Judah, p. 117



"Michael and His Lost Angel" is Jones most discussed drama. Opinion differs greatly as to its merits. In the estimation of some critics it is his greatest achievement, in that of others his poorest work.<sup>1</sup> Jones himself believes that it is his best play.<sup>2</sup> Whatever the final verdict will be, this is certain, that none of his other dramas move us so profoundly as does this play. The memory of it lingers with us long after we have read it, a kind of haunting memory. Ibsen's influence is more apparent in "Michael and His Lost Angel" than in any of Jones' other works. Michael resembles Rosmer in many respects. He is a clergyman, a scholar, an idealist, a mystic, and an ascetic. He also is aroused from his cloistered existence by an adventuress, who forces her presence upon him and wins his love. Like Rebecca, she is ennobled by this love. As in "Rosmersholm" and many other of Ibsen's dramas, there is "the eternal triangle". In the one case a dead wife separates the lovers, in the other, a living husband. Rosmer punished Mortensgard for a sin that he himself became guilty of later. Michael caused his secretary, Andrew, much suffering, and the latter asked that he apply the same rigid law to the conduct of his life as he had imposed upon his erring child. There is the same retributive justice in both instances. The confession scene in the cathedral also is reminiscent of Ibsen, as we have seen in "Saints and Sinners" and in "Judah". However, there is no retrospective action, as in "Rosmersholm". The whole story is presented, before the audience, and where past action is related,

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1 T.H. Dickinson, The Contemporary Drama of England, p. 101

2 W.T. Phelps, The Twentieth Century Theatre, p. 10





it is artificially done.

As in "Judah" the soul struggles of a minister in conflict with truth on the one side, and love for a woman on the other, a woman who is inferior in character, is depicted. It shows the tragedy of love, a tragedy that is inevitable when circumstances throw two people together, who, one might say, belong to entirely different worlds as far as life and character are concerned. It brings us face to face with one of the deepest and most unfathomable mysteries of life, and when the curtain goes down in the last act we are not one whit nearer to the solution of that mystery which has both baffled and defied the wisest of all ages. That is the reason why perhaps, so few real love stories have been written. Heloise has said that there is nothing we have so little in our control as our hearts; instead of commanding it we can only obey it. Jones has shown that character affects character, the influence of soul upon soul, but he has not explained it.

The action, as in most of Ibsen's dramas, largely takes place in the soul of the leading characters. The exposition begins immediately. By means of a dialogue between the Reverend Mark Docwray and Andrew Gibbard we learn that the latter's daughter, Rose, is making a public confession of her fault in church, having been urged to do so by the Reverend Michael Feversham, minister of the Anglican Church at Clevedon, who is sincere in his belief in the power of public confession as a means of absolving the soul from sin. He is an enemy of lies and deceit, and an uncompromising champion of truth. Andrew says, "It wasn't like lying; it was like murdering the truth to tell lies to him." The poor girl comes out of the church accompanied by Michael, who, with sympathy points to the





happiness and the peace that will be hers for having thus atoned for her transgression of the moral law. When the grief stricken father says to him, "Ah, sir, you, it's easy for you to talk. You weren't likely to be tempted, so you aren't likely to fall." Michael answers, "I trust not! I pray God to keep me. But if ever I did, I should think him my true friend who make me confess and rid my soul of my guilt."<sup>1</sup> By means of further dialogue our interest is aroused in a wealthy young widow, whose sincerity is questioned by Michael. She is a society woman who was born in Australia, but who came to England after the death of her father and husband. We learn that her great-grandfather was a convict. She read his book "The Hidden Life" and sought his acquaintance. She regularly attends his services and makes large contributions to his church. Even before she enters we see that her presence has troubled him. The last half of the act is taken up with a dialogue between Michael and this young widow, Audrie Lesden. She comes to him for spiritual help, as she says. At once we feel the difference in their birth and training. His mother, whose portrait he cherishes as an inspiration, was a religious woman who had dedicated his life to the work of the Lord even before he saw the light of this world. From his point of view this worldly woman is beyond redemption, and he loses his temper in telling her so. She rebukes him for it. He in turn, asks her to call on him in the future only when she is in real need of his services. The act closes with Audrie's words: "Do save me. I am worth saving....Your bad angel has kissed your good angel." He tolerated her to kiss the portrait of his saintly mother after he had refused it several times. This shows his first yielding to her

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will.

In the beginning of the second act we see the minister on Saint Decuman's Island, fully conscious of his love, but also fully determined to conquer it; for he realizes the hopelessness of their love. He thinks merely by burning her letter in which she has warned him against herself, that he could be free again and forget all about her. Her unexpected visit shows how futile his hopes of forgetting her have been. He admits that he loves her, but since he is vowed to heavenly things, he asks her to leave him to prove her love. This she agrees to do. However, a misdirected telegram is the cause that "no boat will come tonight" and they are obliged to pass the night alone on the Island.

In the third Act Andrew suspects that something is wrong, because Michael could not satisfactorily explain his sudden return from the Island. Michael tries to ease his conscience by offering to marry Audrie. He would not have anything undone, and yet he cannot look at his mother's picture anymore. He is tortured by Andrew's suspicion, and demands an explanation. His secretary knows their secret. When he learns that Audrie's husband is alive his sense of guilt compels him to send her away forever, back to duty and deep repentance. He also will toil back to repentance and peace. Retributive justice in the form of Andrew demands that he go the same way poor Rose went, make a public confession to his congregation.

In the fourth act we find Michael preparing to take leave of his church. His only regret seems to be that he has proved himself unworthy to lead his people through the church in chariots of fire. But Audrie comes once more, this time in the church, and to find that her lover is still the Marble Saint. In the new church, built with Audrie's money, he confesses his guilt, and goes from among his





people a penitent sinner. But in vain he tries to get away from the past; not even in the secluded walls of a monastery in far off Italy does he find peace and oblivion. His love has completely mastered him. Although he has only memory and a withered rose to recall her presence, he cannot forget her. She too, loves him, notwithstanding his coldness and his inexorableness. She plunged into the gaieties of London life to find forgetfulness but did not succeed. Finally, sick and dying, she seeks him for the last time in his monastic retreat, and dies happily in his arms, and leaves him alone. Now he lives for the one thought - that of meeting her again.

In contrast to most of Jones' plays, character predominates over plot in "Michael and his Lost Angel." The characters are well drawn and realistic. The hero and heroine are, as is often the case in Ibsen's plays, past their youth, Audrie being thirty years of age and Michael forty. Nothing detracts from the main interest; there are no subsidiary actions, no persons inserted for merely comic relief. Audrie's strange humor brightens this sombre drama here and there like flashes of lightning on a stormy night. The action moves rapidly by means of dialogues, that are simple, natural, and at times poetic. There is not a single superfluous or rhetorical speech. The confession of Michael is clothed in the simplest language. There is but one long soliloquy, two soliloquy-asides, and one unintentional overhearing scene. Jones takes a great deal of liberty with the unities of time and place in this drama. This is characteristic of him. The tragic end in "Michael and his Lost Angel" is a characteristic of Ibsen that Jones rarely makes use of. "Saints and Sinners", too, ended with the death of the heroine. It is the same old sermon, the wages of sin is death." Jones also accounts for Audrie's character in heredity. Her great-grandfather





was a convict. She is a vain frivolous woman, but her love for Michael brings out the best in her nature.

As in "Judah" and "Michael and his Lost Angel" the leading figure in "The Physician" is a man at war with himself. It shows the conflict of struggle in the soul of a physician between his professional duty and his own interest - his profession and his love. In the two first named dramas the heroes love women who are unworthy, in the latter, the hero loves a woman who belongs to someone else, and thus gets into conflict with his profession.

Doctor Lewin Carey is a famous nerve specialist, with a large practice in London. He loves Lady Valerie Camville, a heartless, selfish woman, whose worthless husband has left her. She is another Hedda Gabler in miniature. The beautiful grass widow coldly forsakes the Doctor for a new lover, regardless of his pleading and his despair. Scarcely had she left the room when a pretty young girl of about twenty years of age enters. She seeks his aid to restore her lover to health. The Doctor leaves his remunerative practice to a friend and goes to Fontleas. He learns that the lover of his new friend, Edana Hinde, whose father is a village minister, is a temperance reformer who had failed to reform himself. Like Lovberg in "Hedda Gabler" Walter Amphiel, has great ability and high ideals but cannot resist the temptation of drink. On discovering the secret vice of the temperance lecturer, he demands that Amphiel break off his engagement with Edana, whom the Doctor has learned to love. Finally, he wins a victory over himself, and promises to do his utmost to save Amphiel from himself. This scene at the close of Act II is a very effective melodrama, a genre that Jones can never get away from.



For six months Dr. Carey permits Amphiel to live with him in order to restrain him from indulging in intoxicants. Amphiel, however, evading his vigilance, steals away and plunges into his old dissipations. Carey employs detectives, who find him frequenting lowest dens in Bristol. Edena is beside herself with anxiety and grief at his sudden disappearance. She thinks he had left to engage in his work of reform. Dr. Carey withholds the truth from her. In the meanwhile Lady Valerie, whose husband, another Captain Alving, has died, seeks the doctor and tries to win back his love. He spurns her pretended affection for him. She is easily consoled, and asks in the choice of a husband. While he accompanies her back to the hotel Edena comes with her father. The latter having been called away on a pastoral mission, the girl, overcome by fatigue, falls asleep in an arm chair and dreams aloud that her lover is in great danger. This soliloquy of the sleeping girl savors of the melodrama. The doctor returns. Presently Amphiel enters, and attempts to deceive Carey, who is disgusted with him, and hates him both because of his unmanly vice and because he stands between his love and its realization. At first Amphiel denies his guilt, but the doctor confronts him with proofs of his conduct during his absence. He enjoins upon him to make a confession to Edena. He is in despair, and threatens to take his life if another chance be not given him. Carey finally consents to give the poor wretch a last chance for Edena's sake, and takes him to India, where he is going in the interest of his profession. But Edena overhears the whole conversation from behind a curtain, and steps forth just as the curtain goes down. Carey sees her and says, "You heard? " The revelation of her lover's double life is a great shock to her and she is very ill for many months. She now abhors him but dreads to let him know this out of





pity for him. The news of his return pains and troubles her. The discovery that Amphiel had been the cause of the disgrace and death of a young girl of the parish, Jessie Gurdon, added horror to her dislike for him and she is resolved not to marry him. She is relieved from this anxiety when Dr. Carey returns and gently acquaints her with the news that her lover, the apostle of temperance, had died a victim of his own intemperance, a few days before they were to sail for England. As a reward for his faithful, unselfish devotion to his professional duties, the physician received the beautiful Edena for his life. If the wages of sin is death, the wages of virtue is life and happiness. This end must satisfy the most exacting demands of the melodrama.

In fact "The Physician" is a good example of Jones' tendency toward a combination of the melodrama and the problem-play. The story is interesting and fascinating. The plot is emphasized at the expense of the characters. His theory of not boring the theatre-goers is well illustrated. The character of Dr. Carey can hardly be called realistic. He resembles more the traditional hero in the melodrama, than a professional man who has attained the age of forty-five or fifty. Amphiel is a little nearer to life. He, like Lovborg, has high aspirations, but, like Ibsen's heroes he is too weak to withstand the temptations of drink. His villainous treatment of Jessie makes him also a less sympathetic character than Lovborg.

We have met Lady Valerie before. She strongly resembles Lady Jessica in "The Liars" and Drusilla in "The Dancing Girl", all three of whom recall to our mind Regina, Hedda and Rita. The subsidiary characters are types frequently found in the melodrama. Edena is very poorly drawn. She resembles the colorless heroines of Jones' earlier plays. Technically, the play is admirably constructed.





The exposition is masterful in execution. The dialogue, on the whole is natural and realistic. The soliloquy has disappeared entirely, and only one dialogue-aside is used. However, there are two over-hearing scenes, one fortuitous and one unintentional. The overhearing scene is one of Jones' favorite devices.

Filon has called our attention to the fact that Ibsen's influence is especially evident in the case of Jones' heroines. He says, "It is above all, when he is depicting women that he seems to me to be haunted by the memory of the Norwegian's heroines."<sup>1</sup> In his adaptation of "A Doll's House" in collaboration with Henry Hermann, in 1884, Jones had already introduced Nora to the English public. It was more of an imitation to be sure, and probably Ibsen himself would have had to put on his glasses to recognize her. In "The Dancing Girl", written seven years later, Jones unquestionably had Nora in mind when he created the character of Drusilla Ives. Her strong individualism, her insistence on living her life in her own way, and her utter disregard for her duties toward her family and toward society are strangely reminiscent of Nora. This outbreak of feminine individualism was something new in the English drama. Dickinson remarks, "And to another order still belongs the character of the "pagan" Drusilla, one of the first embodiments of the "right to life" motive in the English drama."<sup>2</sup> Drusilla's answer to her father's reproaches gives expression to this doctrine of individualism, "You brought me up as you thought best - But your mean, narrow life stifled me, crushed me! I couldn't breathe in it! I wanted a larger, freer, wider life - I was perishing for

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1 A. Filon, The English Stage, transl. by F. Whyte, p. 297

2 T.H. Dickinson, The Contemporary Drama of England, p. 100



the want of it!....I want to live and live in every pulse of me!

For every moment of my life - and I will! I will be myself! "<sup>1</sup>

Jones' conservatism naturally repudiates this doctrine; he makes use of it simply to teach a moral lesson, to preach "an old-fashioned sermon against the evils of loose living", as Chandler puts it."<sup>2</sup> Therefore the fate of the heroine is inevitable; death must overtake her in the end. Individualism leads Nora to full self-realization and life, Drusilla to self-annihilation and death. Jones cannot tolerate any infringement of the moral law. Dickinson sees in Drusilla something more than a carefully portrayed type of the woman tempter. He sees in her an embodiment of the testing and disintegrating forces of the present time. He says, "Drusilla represents the downfall of the Duke of Guisebury, and through him the suffering of the whole island dependent upon him and the jeopardizing of explorers in the arctic circle. As Guisebury clears her out of his life his character becomes stronger. Finally the neglected breakwaters of his life are all rebuilt."<sup>3</sup> In addition, the dancing scenes as in "A Doll's House", are effective, and show Ibsen's influence also. However, as in all Jones' serious plays, the melodramatic element must creep in, and we have a combination of problem play and melodrama. Character analysis, logic, realism - everything must be sacrificed for the big scenes, introduced solely for theatrical effect, as for instance, the confession scenes in "Saints and Sinners", "Judah" and "Michael and His Lost Angel"; the scene in which the inventor Blenkarn breaks up the furniture to feed his kiln in "The middleman"; the examination scene in "Mrs. Dane's Defence"; and the scene in which Drusilla,

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1 The Dancing Girl, Act III, p. 99

2 F.W. Chandler, Aspects of the Modern Drama, p. 123

3 T.H. Dickinson, The Contemporary Drama of England, p. 100





cursed by her father, falls in a swoon and rolls down stairs.

However, the fact that the play was a success upon the stage proves that the story was an interesting one. Drusilla was brought up in the quiet, Quaker settlement on an island off the Cornish coast. She left the home of her pious father and went to London and found employment there. While soliciting subscriptions for a charitable enterprise, she meets the Duke of Guisebury, who is the landlord of her native island. She nearly ruins him with her extravagance. She now lives in great luxury and becomes a famous dancer, under the name of Diana Valrose. Her father believes that she is still working in London. While on a visit home, she wins the love of John Christison, a devout Quaker, who offers to marry her. The Duke follows her to the island. During his short stay, Sybil Crake, a crippled girl, whose life he had saved, reminds him that life is serious. He regrets having neglected his tenants, and promises to build a breakwater to protect the inhabitants from the constant danger of being swept into the sea. Once back in London, however, he forgets all about his good intentions, and wastes nearly all the remainder of his fortune on the beautiful dancer. Two years have passed and nothing has been done. The men on the island have to seek another home. So they decide to go on an Arctic expedition. John has also wasted two years in idleness, the slave of Drusilla. He was to superintend the construction of the breakwater. He finally decides to leave Drusilla and to return to England and attempt to build the breakwater without the Duke's money. The latter tries to rescue what is left of his wasted life; he wants to marry Drusilla and retire to a small place and spend the rest of his days peacefully. But she spurns his offer as he had spurned her request to restore her honor by giving her his name.





Thereupon, he decides to commit suicide, and informs the audience of his intentions in these words, at the close of Act II: "This world has given me a few good kicks - I've had just enough of it. I'll <sup>1</sup> give this world one good kick back, and then I'll get out of it." But he really loves Drusilla as he confesses, she had never bored him. Now before he leaves this world, he wishes to introduce Drusilla to society with the aid of his aunt, Lady Bawtry, and gives a great reception in her honor. While Drusilla is entertaining the guests with dancing, her father enters and finds that the notorious Diana Valrose is his own daughter. He denounces her, tears the fineries from her dancing costume, pronounces a curse upon her, and rushes out. Drusilla faints and rolls down the stairs, while the guests hurry away scandalized. After a rather lengthy soliloquy, the Duke is about to drink poison from a phial which he has raised to his lips, when his good angel, Sybil, who had stealthily entered the room, restrains his hand. The curtain falls. The last act is even more melodramatic. It is two years later. The Duke of whom his aunt, Lady Bawtry, had said, "I wish your faults had any modesty to preserve. Your vices are so terrible décolletée. Really, Guise, you are too outrageous for words. And what have you gained by shocking society?", <sup>2</sup> has not only become respectable, but finds delight in being respected. This social rebel has returned to respectability, and finds happiness in work just as Faust has done. The breakwater is completed, the men return from the Arctic expedition to enjoy the fruits of the Duke's

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1 The Dancing Girl, Act II, p. 75

2 Ibid., Act III, p. 87



labors. To crown the triumph of a virtuous life, the good angel Sybil becomes his wife. And to demonstrate the truth that "the wages of sin is death" a sister of charity brings to the pious father the belongings of his lost Drusilla, who had danced even the Sunday night before she had passed away. We recognize in this play both Jones the conservative, and Jones the moralist.

The plot is emphasized at the expense of character, as so often happens in Jones' plays. The action, however, is unified; the first three acts have shown the consequences of Drusilla's influence over her two lovers, and the fourth showed the happiness which they attained when both freed themselves from this influence. For, if the Duke found happiness in fulfilling his duty and in a marriage with a good woman, John found also happiness doing his duty and in his marriage with Faith, Drusilla's sister. Lady Bawtry is no new character; she is the female *raisonneur*, Jones' spokesman. This is shown in her different speeches to the Duke. Among other philosophical observations she says: "The world is just what it always was and always will be. Society is just what it was and always will be. What is the use of making yourself a nuisance by trying to reform it on the one hand, or shocking it and defying it on the other?"<sup>1</sup> In point of technique it shows the French influence. There are two long soliloquies and several short ones. The play opens with a short soliloquy that is both artificial and rhetorical. There are also several asides in the play. The time is spread out over four years and a half. There are thirty-three characters besides fishermen, tenants, villagers, guests and children. The dialogue at times is realistic, but for the most part artificial, unreal.

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1 The Dancing Girl, Act III, p. 87





The heroine in "Mrs. Dane's Defense" is also a woman with a past. Unlike Drusilla, however, she does not persist in violating the moral law, nor does she attempt to justify her fault. On the contrary, she wishes to conceal it to establish herself in society, and to marry a respectable young man of a good family. But, like Rebecca West, she cannot live down her past; it is an insurmountable barrier that forever separates her from happiness. Her fault is discovered. It is the same old theme, the triumph of truth over falsehood. Moreover, as in the case of Vashti and Audrie, the wayward woman is ennobled by the love of a good man. Although the hero, Lionel Carteret, can hardly be compared with Judah and Michael, still the three men have this in common: their love is so profound that it endures even after the woman has been proven unworthy. In this play Jones supports the thesis "that a woman with a past is no proper mate for a young man with a future."<sup>1</sup>

"Mrs. Dane's Defense" differs from all other dramas of Jones in that the action, as in most of Ibsen's prose plays, is largely retrospective. The first three acts are taken up with the revelation of Mrs. Dane's past, in which the "eternal triangle" so frequently employed by Ibsen, figures very prominently. The appeal, that is in the first three acts, is to the intellect not to the emotion. The struggle is one of wills, or rather, of wits. The judge is determined to establish the truth; Mrs. Dane is equally bent upon concealing it. In this duel of wits, the judge out-matches her, and her whole past is revealed. The fourth act serves merely to bring everything to a happy conclusion. The real drama is ended with the fall of the curtain in Act III. It has well been termed a comedy with a tragic interlude.<sup>2</sup>

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1 F. W. Chandler, Aspects of Modern Drama, p. 123

2 K. A. H. Teichmann, Henry Arthur Jones Dramen, p. 43





Five years before the play opens the beautiful Felicia Hindemarsch, like Rebecca in "Rosmersholm" had been a companion to Mrs. Trent, the middle-aged wife of Horace Trent. She, too, fell in love with the lady's husband, who returned her love. The wife committed suicide, just as Beata had done. The husband lost his reason. To cover up this scandal, which occurred in Vienna, Felicia assumes the name of Mrs. Lucy Dane, establishes herself in Sunningwater, a suburban town about twenty miles from London. She goes to the parish church and liberally subscribes to the church benevolences. The Vicar of Sunningwater introduces her into society. She is especially successful in gaining the admiration of men. Now in this town is an old gossip, who thrives on scandal, Mrs. Bulsom-Porter, a character almost identical with the scandal mongering Mrs. Rummel in "Pillars of Society". Mrs. Dane has been in the town about two months when the play begins. The first act opens with a quarrel between Mrs. Bulsom-Porter and her husband, who is a devoted admirer of the pretty young stranger. The very second speech introduces the theme. She says to him, "I warn you that if you continue to pay such marked attention to that woman, I shall tell the whole neighborhood her history." <sup>1</sup> Her nephew, James Risby, had told her that Mrs. Dane resembles Miss Hindemarsch, and she was immediately convinced that the two women were the same person. She loves to expose immorality not for the purpose of purifying society, but to stir up trouble. Risby sees this, and to avoid a scandal, he attempts to avert it by telling his aunt that he was mistaken, that the resemblance was really very slight. In denying it, he repeats the tragedy of the "eternal triangle" which happened at Vienna. Lionel Carteret, adopted

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1 Mrs. Dane's Defense, Act I, p. 2



son of the renowned judge, Sir Daniel Carteret, who has fallen in love with Mrs. Dane, proposes to her, and they become engaged. But the rumor of the scandal has reached her and she begins to show some uneasiness. Sir Daniel is displeased with this engagement and tries to persuade the young man that he had been too hasty in his proposal. At once we recognize Sir Daniel as the *raisonneur*, Jones' spokesman, who sees to it that the moral is clinched, and that all is finally settled and straightened out. The judge enlists the help of Lady Eastney, the aunt of Janet Colquhoun, a young girl whom Lionel had loved before he met Mrs. Dane. He does not want the boy "to make a mess of his life as he had of his", he tells Lady Eastney. He takes this opportunity to tell her how he once loved Lionel's mother, and how when they were on the point of eloping, the boy became ill and she stayed home to nurse him back to life. God had shown them the path of duty, and both resigned themselves to fate. He never saw her again. When the boy was left an orphan he adopted him and loved him as he would his own son. Now he was determined that the boy should be happy. At the close of the act the scandal about Mrs. Dane is pretty well spread. In the second act everybody is beginning to cut her. Mrs. Dane denies the story, but does not defend herself. The Reverend Canon Bonsey is greatly upset over the affair, and dreads the displeasure of his aristocratic patron, the Duchess, who he learns is going to "haul him over the coals". Lady Eastney champions Mrs. Dane's cause, not because she cares especially to see her vindicated, but because she wants to humiliate Mrs. Bulsom-Porter, whom she despises. She remarks, "Mrs. Bulsom-Porter! How is it that

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1 Mrs. Dane's Defense, Act 1, p. 23

2 Ibid., Act 11, p. 41





everything horrid in this neighborhood radiates to and from that woman! What is she saying, and how does she know." <sup>1</sup> Mrs. Bulsom-Porter, however, is determined to prove Mrs. Dane guilty. She hires a detective and sends him to Vienna to get evidence. Mrs. Dane cunningly bribes him and he declares that his investigations clearly show that she is not Miss Hindemarsch. A letter from Pisby confirms this statement. Sir Daniel insists that her innocence must be proved, and Mrs. Bulsom-Porter be compelled to make a public apology. He asks Mrs. Dane to put her case in his hands. She consents. In the third act we have the characteristic big scenes of Jones; not as imposing as the cathedral scene, to be sure, but a brilliant cross-examination which forces Mrs. Dane to confess her fault. He says to her, "I am sorry for you, believe me, very sorry. But why did you wade through all that morass of lies and deceit? Why didn't you have the courage to tell me the truth?" <sup>2</sup> Now he insists that she tell Lionel the truth. The truth triumphs over falsehood. Lionel at first refuses to consent to give her up. But Sir Daniel resorts again to argument, and pictures to him his unhappy future. Among other things he says, "All that you'll know is, she can lie; she lied to me; she lied to her father; she lied to all of us; she lied, and lied and lied, - is she lying to me now?" And you'll never know. Your life will be a very hell to you." He adds, "Love <sup>3</sup> isn't the only thing on earth. It oughtn't always to be the first" <sup>4</sup> Nor does Mrs. Dane escape his moralizing. She says to him:

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1 Mrs. Danes Defense, Act II, p. 41

2 Ibid., Act III, p. 100

3 Ibid., Act IV, p. 120

4 Ibid., Act IV, p. 121





Mrs. Dane: "Then who is it, what is it, drives me out?"

Sir Daniel: "The law, the hard law that we didn't make, that we would break up if we could, for we are all sinners at heart - the law that is above us all, made for us all, that we cannot escape from, that we must keep<sup>1</sup> or perish."

She loses her lover but retains her position in society, because Mrs. Bulsom-Porter must be humiliated. She signs the apology under protest. The faithful Janet is ready to take back Lionel. As a reward for his efforts in the interest of truth Sir Daniel receives in marriage the beautiful Lady Eastney.

In plot construction this play shows great perfection. The preparation and development are masterfully executed. No nonessentials hindered the progress of the action. This same naturalness and realism is present in the dialogue. The soliloquy and aside are very rarely made use of, and but one overhearing scene occurs in the whole play. The "big scene", of course, is a cross-examination in the third act.

In his light comedy "Whitewashing Julia", Jones treats the problem of the woman with a ~~past~~ in an entirely different manner. In fact, he does not even take the trouble to enlighten the audience as to her guilt or her innocence. He directs all his attention to cleverly portraying, from beginning to end, the process of whitewashing Julia, and the strangest thing about it is, that at the close the audience does not know whether she needed all this whitewashing or not. The revelation of the truth concerning the "puff-box" mystery is a thing that the audience looks forward to, but its exp-

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1 Mrs. Danes Defense, Act IV, p. 125



pectation is never realized, the suspense ends in disappointment. Yet, the whole affair is so cleverly handled that the play-goer thoroughly enjoys the performance inspite of the disappointment. Julia's lover is willing to let bygones be bygones on both sides, and refuses to open the letter that contains the explanation which Julia had promised would be given at the proper time. He chivalrously burns the letter containing the story about her relations with the Duke of Savona, and as his wife she will be accepted by society. Thus she not only retains her place in society, but also attains happiness by marrying the man she loves, and the end is naturally a happy one.

As in "The Liars", Jones satirizes in this play the social set of a typical English town, exposing its hypocrisies and its bigotry. The characters are nearly all familiar ones. There is a hypocritical guardian of morality, who has the tables turned on him; the mask of self-righteousness and bigotry is torn off by the very man at whom he was continually preaching; the sanctimonious Bishop of Shanctonbury, who cuts Julia in order not to offend the aristocratic members of his diocese, and who grows indulgent when she is restored to her former social position. The play presents a group picture which is truly taken from life. The rumored scandal about Julia and the Duke is utilized by Jones to criticise high society in England.





## CHAPTER VI

## CONCLUSION

As we have seen, Jones began his career as a playwright with the melodrama. In this genre he has given England her best work, "The Silver King," written in 1882. At about this time Ibsen made his appearance in England, and, owing to the affinity between the Norwegian and the English character, found a welcome there. Especially attracted to his plays was this rising young dramatist, whose talent and earnestness of purpose were very promising for the English stage. Having come under the influence of Ibsen's realism, he became inspired with a vision, and he seriously set to work to make his dream a reality. His idea was to raise the theatre to the level of good drama, and he resolved to give to the English public plays that would fulfill the purpose of the drama. This purpose is the representation and the interpretation of life. If the stage is to have a message for its age, the playwright must be at liberty to represent in his dramas any phase of life, religion not excepted. Following these ideas, he produced in 1884 his first social play, "Saints and Sinners", a drama which like "The Pillars of Society", depicts provincial society, with all its cant, hypocrisies, bigotry, and petty meannesses. In his subsequent social dramas and social satires he continues his attacks upon the besetting sins of the middle and the upper classes of England. He is primarily a reformer, and does not hesitate to sacrifice art, if necessary, to "clinch" the moral. He not only raises questions but also attempts to answer them. Consequently, his plays are often a sermon on life as





well as a representation of life. Ibsen did not believe in making<sup>1</sup> art the handmaid of propaganda. "Mein Amt is Fragen nicht antworten," he said. Someone has said, that a play which represents life is a drama, but a play which interprets life is a great drama. This fact is well illustrated in the works of the two playwrights. While Jones' plays represent life, Ibsen's interpret life; the former created dramas, the latter, great dramas. Henderson says, "The play which preaches is seldom art."<sup>2</sup> This didactic element, personified in the raisonneur is rarely found in the plays of Ibsen. Jones could never get entirely away from the influence of the melodrama. He holds that the science of successful play-writing is the science of not boring the audience, hence his emphasis on plot, which resulted in giving him the reputation of being one of the foremost theatrical story-tellers. Therefore most of the plots have vivid action; they are usually both interesting and fascinating. With the exception of "Mrs. Dane's Defense" the whole story is acted out upon the stage before the audience, while Ibsen's plays mirror the past in the present action and what is presented upon the stage is merely the end of a story. Too often realism must make way for theatrical effect. Even character and logic are sacrificed to this end. For this reason Jones has never been successful in creating real tragedies of the Ibsen type.

As in the case of Ibsen, we find in many of Jones' social plays the conflict of truth with hypocrisy represented either by the hero struggling, single-handed, and alone against a social group to expose its cant and hypocrisy and exalt the truth, or the individual struggling to free his own life from lies in which his love for a

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1 Die Literature, Essay on Henrik Ibsen, P. 64

2 A. Henderson, The Changing Drama, p. 100



wayward woman has entangled him, and in which the "eternal triangle" often figures. The outcome of this conflict is usually the triumph of truth over falsehood, brought about either by enforced or by voluntary confession, which brings peace to the soul of the transgressor.

In his social dramas Jones also discusses the marriage question, not, to be sure from the standpoint of a revolutionary, as Ibsen has done, but from that of a conservative, who upholds the customs and conventions of society regardless whether they are right or wrong. His attitude is that of a compromiser.

We have also noticed that there is a similarity between the characters of Jones and those of the Norwegian playwright. The priestly hero, the captain of industry, the physician, the gifted idealist, who becomes a victim of drink, the woman struggling to assert her independence, and her individualism, the wayward woman ennobled through the love of a good man, the scandal-monger, who declares war against immorality, not to promote social purity but to stir up trouble - all are reminiscent of Ibsen.

Beginning with "Saints and Sinners" we also have perceived in the social dramas, and satirical comedies of Jones, as a result of the influence of Ibsen's realism, a marked advance in technique. The artificial devices of the French school disappear almost entirely. The exposition becomes more direct, and depends less upon chance happenings, while the dialogue is by far more natural and realistic. Soliloquies and asides are rarely employed in his later works. However, the overhearing scene has never been completely discarded.

In spite of his theory of Beauty, Mystery, Passion, and





Imagination, Jones' dramas leave us with a certain feeling of hopelessness and pessimism in regard to the destiny of the human race, while Ibsen's uncompromising realism kindles in our soul the hope of something far better and nobler for humanity in its onward march toward perfection.





LIST OF IBSEN'S PROSE DRAMAS

1.	The League of Youth-----	1869
2.	Pillars of Society-----	1877
3.	A Doll's House-----	1879
4.	Ghosts-----	1881
5.	An Enemy of The People-----	1882
6.	The Wild Duck-----	1884
7.	Rosmersholm-----	1886
8.	The Lady From the Sea-----	1888
9.	Hedda Gabler-----	1890
10.	The Master Builder-----	1892
11.	Little Eyolf-----	1894
12.	John Gabriel Borkman-----	1896
13.	When We Dead Awaken-----	1899



LIST OF JONES' PROBLEM PLAYS

1.	The Silver King-----	1882
2.	Saints and Sinners-----	1884
3.	The Middleman-----	1889
4.	Judah-----	1890
5.	The Dancing Girl-----	1891
6.	The Crusaders-----	1891
7.	The Case of Rebellious Susan-----	1894
8.	The Triumph of The Philistines-----	1895
9.	Michael and His Lost Angel-----	1896
10.	The Physician-----	1897
11.	The Liars-----	1897
12.	Mrs. Dane's Defence-----	1900
13.	Whitewashing Julia-----	1903
14.	The Hypocrites-----	1906
15.	Dolly Reforming Herself-----	1908
16.	The Lie-----	1914





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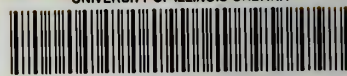
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